DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 476 591 FL 027 660

AUTHOR	Gregor, Keith, Ed.
TITLE	Irish Studies Today.
ISSN	ISSN-1578-7044
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	161p.; Theme issue. Published biannually.
AVAILABLE FROM	Servicio de Pulicaciones, Universidad de Murcia, c/ o Actor Isidoro Marquez, 9-3, 30007 Vistalegre, Murcia, Spain (annual subscription: 15 Euro, individuals; 30 Euro, institutions; single issues: 10 Euro, individuals; 20 Euro, institutions). E-mail: servpubl@um.es.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	International Journal of English Studies; v2 n2 2002
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Art Education; *Cultural Differences; Elementary Secondary Education; Females; Fiction; Films; Foreign Countries; Gender Issues; Higher Education; *Literature; Political Issues; Theater Arts; World History
IDENTIFIERS	Cultural Nationalism; Ireland; *Irish Culture; *Irish Literature; Nostalgia

ABSTRACT

This collection of papers includes the following: "Preface" (Keith Gregor); "Cultural Nationalism and the Irish Literary Revival" (David Pierce); "Transitions in Irish Miscellanies between 1923 and 1940" (Malcom Ballin); "Born into the Troubles: Deirdre Madden's 'Hidden Symptoms'" (Tamara Benito de la Iglesia); "'Reading in the Dark': The Transcendence of Political Reality Through Arts" (Aida Diaz Bild); "Ireland on Screen: A View from Spain" (Rosa Gonzalez Casademont); "Ireland, Nostalgia and Globalisation: Brian Friel's 'Dancing at Lughnasa' on Stage and Screen" (Mireia Aragay); "Returning the Gaze: Culture and the Politics of Surveillance in Ireland" (Spurgeon Thompson); "Narratives of Internal Exile in Mary Lavin's Short Stories" (Marie Arndt); and "I Am, Therefore I'm Not (Women)" (Moynagh Sullivan). It also includes reviews of two books: "Ireland's Others: Gender and Ethnicity in Irish Literature and Popular Culture" (Elizabeth Butler Culingford) and "Irlanda ante uno Nuevo Milenio" (Ines Praga Terente). The books are reviewed by Spurgeon Thompson and Keith Gregor, respectively. (Papers contain references.) (SM)

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Irish Studies Today

Issue Editor:
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Volume 2 Number 2 2002

FL027660

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

Volume 2, Number 2, 2002

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The *International Journal of English Studies* (IJES), published by the University of Murcia (Spain), is a refereed journal which seeks to reflect developments in the general field of English Studies. Edited by members of Murcia's Department of English, the Journal is published twice-yearly in the form of English-language monographs in the fields of Language and Linguistics, Language Learning and Teaching, Literature and Cultural Studies, and attracts contributions from both nationally and internationally acclaimed scholars.

Subscriptions, Advertising and Exchange

The subscription rates and single issues are as follows (including postage and VAT):

One-year subscription:	15 € (14 $) individuals;	30 € (28 $) institutions
Single issue:	10 € (9 $) individuals;	20 € (18 $) institutions

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ISSN: 1578-7044
D.L.: MU-2014-2001

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International Journal
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English Studies

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Preface

"Something is happening [in Irish Studies] that belongs both to Ireland and the world beyond, both to literature and the wider culture." So writes David Pierce in the opening article of this special issue of the *International Journal of English Studies* called "Irish Studies Today". The Good Friday agreement and present peace process in Ulster, the sesquicentenary of the Great Irish Famine, have all focussed attention on developments both north and south of the Irish border, on a succession of events and their representations whose true significance extends well beyond the confines of the communities in which they are produced. Meanwhile, mass culture phenomena such as Irish cinema, Irish music or Irish pubs (all neatly packaged and carefully marketed for consumers both at home and abroad) have stimulated an interest in the 'Emeral Isle' which has nonetheless transcended the stereotyping cant of postcard, tabloid or celluloid image-production and found an unlikely niche in the cloistered world of academic discourse. To say this is not to belittle the prolific and important work of scholars who for over a century assisted in the evolution of Irish Studies towards a separate and respectable discipline. But just as in its own day, and under the increasing 'extra-academic' threat of critical theory in the eighties and early nineties, English Studies lost its essentialist, hierarchizing and predominantly 'literary' thrust and began the drift towards the eclectic shores of 'cultural studies', so Irish Studies seems to be changing tack and to have initiated a new 'postcolonial' phase of anti-essentialism and cultural pluralism. 'Revisionist' stances in historiography but also revaluations of the Irish canon and of the barriers erected between 'high' and 'low', 'masculine' and 'feminine', etc. are manifestations of the sea-change in the way Ireland is presently written in Ireland and elsewhere; the dissociation of Irish Studies from English Studies is still another.

It was to offer an idea of this process that this issue was designed. The criterion for sequencing the contributions was (very roughly) historical, though generic and thematic considerations have also influenced the final order. Given that the very notion of 'Ireland' as a political and national entity dates from the close of the nineteenth century, it seemed both useful and appropriate to begin with an article that revisits the debates in *fin-de-siècle* Ireland about the directions to be followed -as well as the positions to be eschewed- in the construction of a 'national' culture. The cultural nationalism of the much maligned 'Irish Literary Revival' is the subject of **DAVID PIERCE**'s provocative piece. Setting the passionate, outspoken idealism of a writer like W. B. Yeats against the skepticism and sardonic wit of a Joyce or a Bernard Shaw, the paper reexamines the problematic roots of the Revival's sense of a nation, as well as projecting Irish culture as a site of struggle between the 'ethnic' nationalism of Yeats and other revivalists and the 'civic' nationalism bequeathed to modern Ireland by an unlikely alliance of Ascendency Protestants and dispossessed Catholics. The dialectic between a quasi-devotional and proto-racist notion of Ireland's otherness and the practical construction of a modern nation-state free from the trammels of colonial rule was staged largely in the sensitive realm of language and, it is argued, brought as its most tangible result the birth of a 'national' theatre inflected, for the first time in Irish stage history, with the dialects of a recognizable and authentically *Irish* English.

Advancing into the twentieth century, **MALCOLM BALLIN** considers the subsequent period between the formation of the Irish Free State and Ireland's official non-involvement in World War Two and how both these and intervening events such as de Valera's rise to power were reflected in two periodicals, George Russell's *The Irish Statesman* and Sean O'Faolain's *The Bell*. While both periodicals concerned themselves with 'cultivating' the Irish population and with rectifying what their editors saw as Ireland's isolation from the cultural debates sweeping the rest of Europe (thus mirroring a similar concern in the cultural criticism of the *Scrutiny* group and later Raymond Williams in the UK), Russell's appeals to the binding force of the predominantly Anglo-Irish tradition were replaced by a very different editorial policy in *The Bell*. While in the *Statesman* the emphasis had fallen on the (potential) merits of the 'new' Free State Ireland, in its successor *The Bell* the intention seems to have been to critique the parochialism of the new formation as well as to express the need to adapt it to the European present. The short but intensive historical space separating both publications provides the background in Ballin's account to the adaptation to Irish realities of a venerable genre, that of the 'miscellany', which was carefully crafted to the meet the needs of, and if necessary interpellate, a particular *class* of readership, whether traditional middle-class or, in *The Bell*'s case, the culture-starved Irish petty bourgeoisie.

There follow two articles which discuss recent developments in narrative fiction, fiction whose inevitable reference-point is the conflict in Northern Ireland. In the first **TAMARA BENITO** considers the work of Deirdre Madden, showing how her 1986 novel *Hidden Symptoms*, which critics have dismissed as artfully side-stepping any engagement with 'the Troubles', is nonetheless steeped in the misery of living in a divided community. Neither of the novel's two main characters, Theresa or the cynical and self-declaredly 'impartial' Robert, can, it is argued, be explained in any other way than in terms of the strife between Catholic nationalists and Protestant unionists. That strife, which has cost the life of Theresa's brother and is subtly but constantly alluded to in the depictions of contemporary Belfast, flickers on the edges of the narrative as the novel's "hidden symptoms", the outward effects of a 'political unconscious' which cannot help but impinge on the present lives of the characters. A similar set of symptoms is traced by **Aída Díaz** in Seamus Deane's work *Reading in the Dark*, a novel based on the dark events of the period 1945-1971 but which nonetheless sounds an incongruously comic note in its defamiliarizing treatment of religious partisanship and grim sectarian executions. Tapping a now highly popular source of discordant humour, the child-narrator, Deane's novel is presented as taking the tension out of, though not detracting from, an otherwise tolerable situation as well as achieving moments of genuine beauty and poetic transcendence of everyday reality. Meanwhile, in the figure of 'Crazy Joe' Deane is said to have developed the archetypal character of the wise fool as both product and luminary of the near absurdist landscape of latter-day Ireland.

Without doubt the art-form which has had the widest impact on the perception of Irish reality outside of Ireland is cinema, and the next two articles offer approaches to this fertile and at the same time controversial field. In her discussion of the seeming discrepancy between the prolific production of films about Ireland and the Irish and the paucity of images and stories actually produced, **Rosa González** revisits one of the inaugural pieces of the genre, John Ford's 1952 classic *The Quiet Man*. If Hollywood producers and directors in particular have helped foster a cliché-ridden image of Ireland as rural paradise or dreamworld reminiscent of Yeats's Innisfree, films like *The Quiet Man*, with its deliberately unreliable voice-over narrator and subtle blurring of the reality-fiction, actor-spectator boundaries can, argues González, also be said to stress the extreme articificiality of such imagery. Though for historically political and religious reasons Spanish audiences have traditionally gone for 'Innisfree', José Luis Guerín's 1990 film of the same name, recently rereleased, strives consciously to deconstruct it, linking clips from Ford's original to documentary-style exposures of the truth behind the stereotypes. The reality-fiction discrepancy also informs **Mireia Aragay**'s article which explores the contrast between the sucess of Brian Friel's stage play *Dancing at Lughnasa* and the luke-warm critical response to the film version directed by Pat O'Connor. The popularity of the Abbey production rests largely, she argues, on the nostalgic inflections of a play-text which, in the context of Ireland's contemporary transformation from a depressed, mainly agricultural economy into the buoyant home of the 'Celtic Tiger', satisfied the yearnings of the play's mainly metropolitan audiences both at home and abroad. Despite the Frank McGuinness-authored screenplay and the current star-status of actresses such as Meryl Streep, the film is regarded as having crashed precisely because it failed to meet such expectations, sacrificing the carefully crafted structure and emotional framework of the Friel text for a kind of surface nostalgia which pleased no-one.

Film is also touched on in **SPURGEON THOMPSON**'s cross-disciplinary piece which traces instances of, and resistances to, the apparatuses of state surveillance in modern Ulster. The sophistication and specialization of the means of camera-based surveillance, including helicopters, and the changing relations between watcher and watched which have ensued, are seen within existing models of state control, Orwellian and Benthamite, models which nonetheless make no allowances for both the complexity and non-totalizable nature of the spaces to be policed. The paper's concern is with both the technologization of Northern Irish surveillance procedures but also the procedures by which individual observed subjects have organized resistance to the intrusive camera-eye. Citing the work of poet Ciaran Carson, photographer Willie Doherty, documentary film-maker Dave Fox and also the 1997 film *The Boxer*, Thompson shows how by "returning the gaze" of the watcher the watched is capable of challenging the 'space-time' power relations on which surveillance depends and also crafting subject-positions which (if only momentarily) elude the relations imposed by the colonial state apparatus and help reconstitute colonized space itself.

The last two articles in this issue examine questions which affect that most misrepresented subject of Irish history, woman. Specifically, **MARIE ARNDT** rereads the work of the American-born Irish novelist and short-story writer Mary Lavin for the "internal exile" of her predominantly female protagonists. Marginalized within their own communities, be it rural Ireland or metropolitan Dublin, or obliged by crippling social and moral constraints to live elsewhere, these characters are shown to embody what has been called the "exilic mind", a symptom of the timeless struggle between reality and desire. Often under suspicion and even criminalized by the larger communities in which they live and suffer, Lavin's widows, single women, social and moral 'misfits' are, it is suggested, intended as the sacrificial victims of post-Independence Ireland as a whole, vehicles of a critique which extends to the use of an exilic third-person 'omniscient' narrator to endistance the world of the narrative from her readers.

A radically different approach is adopted in **MOYNAGH SULLIVAN**'s powerful piece which explores women's place in the discursive symbolic space of Irish Studies. If the latter can be regarded as a 'family', whose ideological props are the Irish church, state and patriarchy in general, the 'place' of women writers has been restricted to that of the Oedipal or phallic 'mother'-object, barred from realizing her own self-identity as subject by either the absence of women's writing from the canon of Irish literature or the 'melancholic' lament for such an absence or loss. The 'exceptionality' of women whose work has been acknowledged at all is, finally, illustrated by a consideration of Eavan Boland's 1998 collection of poems *The Lost Land*, which abandons the "new territory" optimism of the poet's earlier work for the recognition of women's absence from the narrative(s) of modern Ireland. Meanwhile, the strategies of exclusion of an Oedipally-motivated Irish Studies family are highlighted in reviews of the collection by Peter McDonald and Carol Rumens who either slight the presumptions of the self-denying mother-subject in the poems or denounce as "pedantic" her attempts to trace her own historicizable trajectory.

The issue concludes with brief reviews of two recent works which show both the direction(s) and also the complexity of Irish Studies today.

KEITH GREGOR
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Cultural Nationalism and the Irish Literary Revival

DAVID PIERCE*
York St John College

ABSTRACT

The impact of cultural nationalism on the Irish Literary Revival is a topic of continuing interest for the cultural critic and literary historian alike. In recent years, with the Fall of the Berlin Wall, political scientists and others, such as A.D. Smith, Ernest Gellner, and E.J. Hobsbawm, have also focused on the subject of nationalism. The intention here in this article is to revisit a familiar site in the light of these new ideas and to test their validity or appropriateness in the Irish context. The article, part of a larger project to be published in 2003 by Polity Press under the title *A Cultural History of Twentieth-Century Irish Literature*, is divided into 5 sections: What ish my Nation?; What is a Nation?; Do Nations Have Navels?; 1890s: Winds of Change; English As We Speak It In Ireland. Among Irish authors discussed are Hyde, Shaw, Yeats, Wilde, Lady Gregory, Joyce, and Beckett.

KEYWORDS: cultural nationalism; nationalism; colonial encounter; Irishness; Literary Revival; language and identity; Hiberno-English.

If we enter a classroom almost anywhere in the world and ask for the names of Irish writers, the response will almost certainly be immediate and enthusiastic: Yeats, Joyce, O'Casey, Brendan Behan, J.P. Donleavy, Roddy Doyle. With four Nobel Prize-winners for Literature —Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Beckett, Heaney, and five if the Irish-American dramatist O'Neill is

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IJES, vol. 2 (2), 2002, pp. 1-22

included— and a fair sprinkling of Booker Prize-winning novelists and runners-up, Irish writing is now at the forefront of world literature in a way impossible to imagine, say, in 1890. And it is more than just literature which has gained prominence. "The Irish Are Ascendant Again" ran a dramatic headline in *The New York Times* in October 1996, and by way of evidence the author produced Frank McCourt, Bono, Riverdance, Van Morrison, the Chieftains, Liam Neeson, the business leader Anthony O'Reilly, and the hundred Irish names on the Forbes list of the 400 wealthiest Americans.[1] In the last decade also there has been, as Rosa González has more subtly suggested, a cultural greening of Britain.[2] So something is happening that belongs both to Ireland and the world beyond, both to literature and the wider culture.

Arranging the scene in upbeat fashion helps foster the idea that those embarking on a course in modern Irish literature should quite properly spend time reflecting on this literary and cultural explosion, and almost immediately questions surface about cultural and other issues, Ireland's relationship with Britain and Europe, emigration, economic backwardness, the Celtic Tiger, censorship, size of population, Northern Ireland. Here in this article I explore some of the ways in which the beginnings of modern Irish writing seem in part to stem from or to belong to the expression of cultural nationalism which came to prominence after the Act of Union in 1801, received renewed energy from the 1880s onwards under the dual influence of Protestant and Gaelic nationalists, and which continues to hold sway today as if not a dominant then a residual ideology both north and south of the border.

In Tom Stoppard's recent play *Shipwreck* (2002: 57), the literary critic Vissarion Belinsky is animated by the thought that "People are going to be amazed by Russian writers. In literature we're a great nation before we're ready." The first sentence could also apply to Irish writers, but the second sentence —Belinsky is thinking of Gogol, Puskin, Dostoyevsky— is one to ponder in the Irish context. Russia was already a nation-state, if not a "great nation", when the major writers came on the scene; modern Ireland did not become a nation-state until 1922. As for the issue of readiness, this is rarely asked in the context of culture —though it has been in historical accounts of the transition with the outgoing British administration— and it would be difficult to answer given that the achievement of the Revival (1890-1920) was followed so rapidly by the Irish Civil War (1922-3). Part of the problem with the comparison lies in this: modern Ireland has produced great writers but these writers do not or did not in themselves produce either a nation or a great nation. Twentieth-century Irish writers have paraded with the best, but 'great nation' status has rarely featured as a political ambition, the battle-cry of the republic-in-waiting being simply "A Nation Once Again". So the relationship between literature and nationalism in Ireland is different or more complex, where time-frames both overlap and co-exist, where the word "accompanying" is as much in evidence as "foreshadowing", and where the phrase "great nation" seems strangely out of place.

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[1] See Dinitia Smith, "The Irish Are Ascendant Again", *The New York Times* 3 October 1996. The play in the headline is on the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, the social class who ruled Ireland for two hundred years and more. The poor Irish were never 'ascendant'.

[2] Rosa González, "The Cultural Greening of Britain" in *Irlanda Ante Un Nuevo Milenio*, (ed.) Ines Praga Terente (Burgos: AEDEI, 2002), pages 17-34 The Irish are now part of the British cultural scene, with Irish films and plays being widely enjoyed, popular sitcoms such as *Father Ted* shown on British television, and Irish voices heard constantly in the media.

WHAT ISH MY NATION?

"What ish my nation?" asks Captain Macmorris in Shakespeare's *Henry V*. The question, which belongs to both history and the responses to history, has never ceased reverberating in Ireland, especially in the period from the 1880s onwards. Godwin Smith, writing in *The Contemporary Review* in 1885, refused to countenance the possibility that people of English extraction could press for Home Rule: "What can be more ridiculous than to hear a man bearing the name of Parnell, Biggar, or Sexton, talk of driving the British out of Ireland?" (Smith, 1885: 7). A generation later, in Shaw's anti-war play *O'Flaherty V.C.*, with its ironic sub-title "Recruiting Pamphlet", Private O'Flaherty, home on leave after being awarded the Victoria Cross, voices his doubts about patriotism at General Sir Pearce Madigan's country estate in Ireland: "It means different to me than what it would to you, sir. It means England and England's King to you. To me and the like of me, it means talking about the English just the way the English papers talk about the Boshes. And what good has it ever done here in Ireland?" (Shaw, 1934: 821). In the trenches during the Great War, the Irish soldier poet Francis Ledwidge, lamenting the execution of Thomas McDonagh after the 1916 Rising, must also have pondered his position (Ledwidge, 1919: 210). All these shifting responses and allegiances were essentially the product of the colonial encounter between Britain and Ireland, an encounter whose historical accents can still be heard today especially among Northern nationalists and republicans. Thus, according to Bobby Sands, the song which lifted the spirits of republican prisoners in the H-Blocks in the early 1980s was "A Nation Once Again", the unofficial anthem of nationalist Ireland in the nineteenth century (Sands, 1982: 60).

Unlike Spenser, Shakespeare has little to say about the Irish, but in his play celebrating the triumph of the English over the French, he makes much of the *sh*-sound, the intruding Hiberno-English speech marker often used —as here— in a patronising fashion: not what *is* but what *ish* my nation. Elizabethan Shakespeare also serves to remind us that Ireland as a nation predated the Elizabethan period. Free for the most part —unlike its neighbour— from occupation by the Romans, Ireland has its origins in antiquity, in the rivers and wells of mythology, in the survival of its ancient language, in its place-names, in its myths and sagas, in its sense of difference and resistance, and its 'personality' was already in place before Shakespeare came on the scene:

> "I am of Ireland,
> And the Holy Land of Ireland,
> And time runs on," cried she.
> "Come out of charity,
> Come dance with me in Ireland." (Yeats, 1973: 526)

Here is Yeats in his mid-sixties renewing his commitment to *Tír na nÓg*, the mythical Land of Youth, in a poem developed from a fourteenth-century Irish-language dance song "Icham of Irlande". Couched as an invitation by a woman who identifies herself with a spiritual Ireland of the saints but who also recognises the demands of the body and the pressure of time, this is a fine example not only of the "perennialist perspective" on nationhood that Anthony Smith discusses in *The Nation in History* (2000) but also of how pre-modern Ireland could be evoked simply by the act of translation and made modern and enticing in the process.[3]

In spite of—or, equally, because of—its antiquity, defining Ireland's distinctiveness has never been easy. Beguiled by difference, Yeats typically tends to assume or assert rather than spend time proving his case. Throughout his career, he believed the Irish were a "chosen race" (Yeats, 1968: 210), "nearer than the English to the Mythic Age" (Yeats, 1938: 21). As a boy, his mother taught him to feel disgust at the English lack of reserve, pointing out to him how they kiss at railway stations (Yeats, 1916: 60). Bishop Berkeley's response to English empirical philosophy, cited by Yeats in the Irish Senate in the 1920s, was "We Irish do not hold with this", and it summed up much of Yeats's defiant attitude to the world (Pearce, 1961: 172). But, as is apparent in *On the Boiler* (1938), his last great prose rant against the modern world, such defiance could spill over into a form of barely disguised racism: "The Irish mind has still in country rapscallion or in Bernard Shaw an ancient, cold, explosive, detonating impartiality. The English mind, excited by its newspaper proprietors and its schoolmasters, has turned into a hot-bed harlot." (Yeats, 1938: 31)

In point of fact, as *John Bull's Other Island* (1904) repeatedly demonstrates, Shaw himself was better than Yeats at distinguishing English from Irish, not least in showing how the terms were subject to comic reversal. Broadbent, the English entrepreneur, is more sentimental than the Irish, and on his first encounter falls in love with an Irish colleen beside the romantic Round Tower in Rosscullen. Doyle, his Irish colleague long domiciled in London, exhibits the hard-headedness associated with the English, and feels compelled to expose illusions in Anglo-Irish relations wherever they appear. When Broadbent refers to "the melancholy of the Keltic race" (a way of thinking advanced by the nineteenth-century French and English Celticists Ernest Renan and Matthew Arnold and wittily undermined by Shaw's use of a capitalised *k*), Doyle comes close to exploding: "Good God!!! … When people talk about the Celtic race, I feel as if I could burn down London." (Shaw, 1931: 83)

At one level, Yeats's idealism and Shaw's realism suggest opposites, but at another level the fairy king and the man given to wearing fashionable Jaeger suits belong together. There is an extreme quality about both their attitudes, as if the world could be put to rights by climbing on a soapbox (or a disused boiler on Sligo quays in Yeats's case). Unlike Yeats, however, Shaw knew the limitations of his viewpoint, and to counter the "efficient" intellect, his own included, he takes care to foreground the critique of the defrocked priest Father Keegan in *John Bull's Other Island*. An early commentator failed to see anything other than comedy in Shaw's portrayal of Keegan: "a man of God who passes for a lunatic, a mystic who talks to grasshoppers, calls the ass and the pig his brothers, believes like a Buddhist in metamorphosis, and asserts that Hell is on earth!" (Borsa, 1908: 158). But from today's perspective, with his advocacy of green politics and with his attack on "four wicked centuries" of capitalism and "this foolish dream of efficiency" (Shaw, 1931: 174), Keegan sounds like an authentic Shavian mouthpiece.

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[3] Smith provides a useful introduction to the modernist v perennialist debate about the antiquity or otherwise of nations.

If Ireland was the subject, London was frequently the location, so, from Shakespeare to Yeats and Shaw, attempts to distinguish the Irish from the English were inevitably shot through with misconceptions. Baptista Boazio's map of *Irelande* (1599) speaks louder than words. As with other maps of Ireland in the sixteenth century, the perspective is from London with the South of Ireland to the left and the West at the top. More than his predecessors, Boazio attends to the Irish dimension and takes care to provide a glossary for placenames in Irish, but, with its decorative and reassuring depiction of landscape, the map resembles a London estate agent's brochure complete with symbols of the Crown and quiet backwaters for prospective planters to hunt and shoot and fish.[4] The task, therefore, that befell subsequent generations in Ireland was to right the map as it were, reclaim the land, and re-establish a way of seeing adjacent but not necessarily hierarchical relationships between Britain and Ireland.

In tracking the development of cultural nationalism we need to bear in mind that from the outset the knife cut both ways, that passionate realism frequently accompanied passionate idealism, and that Irishness was at once a natural feeling and a contestable concept —and it was rarely resolved by thinking of some happy mean. Whatever "Judge Eglinton" claims in "Scylla and Charybdis", the 'balancing' episode in *Ulysses*, the truth in this matter was almost certainly not "midway" (Joyce, 1986: 9: 1018). Joyce approached the question from the safety of exile but he too blew hot and cold. He was, as he describes Shem in *Finnegans Wake*, "An Irish emigrant the wrong way out" (Joyce, 1968: 190: 36). The double emotion is also in evidence in *Ulysses*, a novel set in Dublin in 1904 and published in Paris in 1922. Ironically —and this has only become apparent with the passage of time— by confidently proclaiming its independence of Britain at a time when Ireland was deeply divided and looking inward, Joyce injected a note of optimism across Europe. If the world is ashen, Joyce seems to say, it is also all that there is, and what he reveals is not so much paralysis or backwardness as a world teeming with language and life.

In the well-known scene in Barney Kiernan's pub in the 'Cyclops' episode of *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom is forced to defend himself against the charge that he is not really Irish: "What is your nation if I may ask?". And the answer the modern-day Macmorris gives to the "Citizen" is the deflating, moving, utopian endstop which draws attention to the etymological roots of the word nation in *natio* or birth: "Ireland, says Bloom. I was born here." This is Joyce providing another angle on the meaning of attachment, a word that in one sense is simply functional (attach this to...) but in another sense does service for some of our most powerful emotional 'attachments'. In 1999, the Thatcherite English politician Norman Tebbit famously suggested a loyalty test: in the contest between England and India at cricket, who do Indians living in Britain support? If he had been an Indian living in Britain, Bloom, the dry-eyed citizen, would have failed the test miserably, getting excited about neither team but anxious about the weather or his wife or drumming up business or something else beside the point.

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[4] For an informative discussion of Boazio's map, see J.H. Andrews, *Shapes of Ireland: Maps and Their Makers 1564-1839* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1997), 75-85.

To insist on his point —and insistence is largely his point— Joyce then produces one of the many Rabelaisian satirical lists that thread their way though this episode as the Citizen and his associates berate Bloom for his non-Irishness:

> The muchtreasured and intricately embroidered ancient Irish facecloth attributed to Solomon of Droma and Manus Tomaltach og MacDonogh, authors of the Book of Ballymote, was then carefully produced and called forth prolonged admiration. No need to dwell on the legendary beauty of the cornerpieces, the acme of art, wherein one can distinctly discern each of the four evangelists in turn presenting to each of the four masters his evangelical symbol, a bogoak sceptre, a North American puma (a far nobler king of beasts than the British article be it said in passing), a Kerry calf and a golden eagle from Carrantuohill. The scenes depicted on the emunctory field, showing our ancient duns and raths and cromlechs and grianauns and seats of learning and maledictive stones are as wonderfully beautiful and the pigments as delicate as when the Sligo illuminators gave free rein to their artistic fantasy long long ago in the time of the Barmecides. Glendalough, the lovely lakes of Killarney, the ruins of Clonmacnois, Cong Abbey, Glen Inagh and the Twelve Pins, Ireland's Eye, the Green Hills of Tallaght, Croagh Patrick, the brewery of Messrs Arthur Guinness, Son and Company (Limited), Lough Neagh's banks, the vale of Ovoca, Isolde's tower, the Mapas obelisk, Sir Patrick Dun's hospital, Cape Clear, the glen of Aherlow, Lynch's castle, the Scotch house, Rathdown Union Workhouse at Loughlinstown, Tullamore jail, Castleconnel rapids Kilballymacshonakill, the cross at Monasterboice, Jury's Hotel, S. Patrick's Purgatory, the Salmon Leap, Maynooth college refectory, Curley's hole, the three birthplaces of the first duke of Wellington, the rock of Cashel, the bog of Allen, the Henry Street Warehouse, Fingal's Cave —all these moving scenes are still there for us today rendered more beautiful still by the waters of sorrow which have passed over them and by the rich incrustations of time. (Joyce, 1986: 12: 1421-1464).

Against such a list, the claims of Bloom to being Irish seem idle, at least at one level. Even if the reader has never visited it, s/he knows that the Maynooth college refectory can hardly compare with the monastic ruins of Clonmacnois, that the mention of Guinness's brewery must mean that other watering-holes are also listed (the Scotch house, Jury's Hotel), that Curley's hole must be vulgar (it is in fact the name of a bathing-place at Dollymount north of Dublin), that the three birthplaces of Wellington must include the stable that forms part of his reputed answer to the question about his Irish origins: "If a gentleman happens to be born in a stable, it does not follow that he should be called a horse". Joyce's move is calculated to amuse by playing with (but not destroying) the idea of nationalism and identity. Nothing we surmise —Ireland's natural beauty or her distinctiveness or indeed Bloom's otherness— merits so much adulation or attention, unless it is to parade the Citizen's soiled handkerchief bearing "the rich incrustations of time".

At one level this is Joyce's retort to one-eyed nationalism (and to the burgeoning mass tourist trade); at another level it is Joyce ruthlessly mocking the pretensions of the Revivalists. But his critique goes further. Nationalism, as the civic nationalist understands better than the ethnic nationalist, needs to address matters which are at once more mundane and more problematic: the prosaic, unheroic nature of everyday life, the relationships between father and son, between the body and the mind, the increasing opposition in bourgeois society between the citizen and the artist, the issue of marital infidelity and sexual desire, humour. Such issues, Joyce seems to imply, cannot be enlisted into a party political programme or, indeed, made much sense of in the context of the colonial encounter between Britain and Ireland. And the point is made without any passionate pleading on Bloom's part: the Odyssean hero is unceremoniously ejected from the cave by the Cyclops, but he has a home to go to and he cannot be driven out of the 'nation' to which he has laid claim.

WHAT IS A NATION?

According to Virginia Woolf, literature occupies common ground which is open for all to trespass on freely: "It is not cut up into nations; there are no wars there." (Woolf, 1992: 168) What she doesn't say is that culture doesn't just occupy but constitutes a site of struggle. Woolf, though, makes a telling observation, and its relevance can be felt today as it was in 1940, when such an essentially pacifist sentiment belonged to a wider strategy of resistance. But if Britain had been overrun by Nazi Germany, then her image of the common ground would have been effectively destroyed, and the call to trespass would have become part of a more militant form of resistance. Yeats stands on the opposite hill. "There is no great literature without nationality, no great nationality without literature." (Yeats, 1989: 30) Born into a country that was perceived by many of its people to be occupied by a foreign power, and convinced that art was not "tribeless, nationless, a blossom gathered in No Man's Land" (Yeats, 1907: 324), Yeats spent a lifetime determined to reclaim independence and to 'nationalise' writing in Ireland.

In "What Is A Nation?", a famous lecture delivered at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1882, the nineteenth-century Breton Celticist Ernest Renan provides a succinct definition of a key term when thinking about cultural nationalism:

> A nation is a living soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is the past, the other is the present. One is the common possession of a rich heritage of memories; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to preserve worthily the undivided inheritance which has been handed down. Man does not improvise. The nation, like the individual, is the outcome of a long past of efforts, and sacrifices, and devotion. (Renan, n.d.: 80)

In many respects the best adjective to encapsulate Yeats's attitude to Ireland is devotion: he was devoted to its cause as if to a person or a church. Almost as if he knew his remarks would be applied to Ireland, Renan introduces between effort and devotion the word that has haunted modern Irish nationalism, namely sacrifice. Renan's emphasis on a living soul and the desire to live together shifts the debate about nationalism away from the externalities of territories, nation-states and maps, and redirects it decisively towards cultural expression and subjective commitment. As a Frenchman, Renan has in mind the disputed territory of Alsace-Lorraine, but his remarks have a wider application, and, while the terms are not Yeats's, the sentiments are.

With its ancient idealism, Ireland for Yeats was a spiritual entity, its history a "living stream", as he calls it in "Easter 1916". Behind its history, dating back to the Druids and beyond, was "a great tapestry" (Yeats, 1977: 513) which even Christianity could not obliterate. Its oral tradition contained a folk imagination and a store-house of memories unique in modern Europe. Renan's notion of an undivided inheritance was also important for Yeats and it belongs with his championing of the imagination of the poor and with his search for Unity of Culture. The past was critical for cultural nationalists, who, under the twin emotionally charged principles of preservation and possession, transformed the enthusiasm of the antiquarian and academic interest into a more active engagement with the present. For Renan, a nation is like an individual; for Yeats, a nation is a family, complete with children whose limbs occasionally, as during the Easter Rising, "run wild".

E.J. Hobsbawm distinguishes two stages in the history of nationalism, one ethnic, the other civic. Civic nationalism, which owed much to the citizen state of the French Revolution, flourished in the period 1830-70. It operated a "threshold principle", insisting that only nations with large populations and territory were entitled to form independent states. It was followed by an ethno-linguistic nationalism in which smaller groups, on the basis of ethnic and/or linguistic ties, laid claim to independence. Ethnic nationalism flourished in the period 1870-1914, and then resurfaced in the last decades of the twentieth century. According to Hobsbawm, the passage from civic-democratic to ethno-linguistic nationalism was marked by "a sharp shift to the political right of nation and flag" (Hobsbawm, 2000: 102).[5] Like Renan —but unlike Joyce— Yeats was an ethnic rather than a civic nationalist. If he had spoken Irish he would have been doubly so. But, as he later acknowledged when tempted to vaunt the "Irishry", Yeats was restrained by English: "Then I remind myself that … I owe my soul to Shakespeare, to Spenser, and to Blake, perhaps to William Morris, and to the English language in which I think, speak, and write, that everything I love has come to me through English." (Yeats, 1968: 519) Like Renan, Yeats was a "tissue of contradictions", "a member of the romantic school, protesting against romanticism" (Renan, 1892: 65). The idea of the good citizen, however, he attacked with the fervour of an ethnic nationalist, bracketing him with "comfort and safety, and with vulgarity and insincerity" (Yeats, 1901: 98). He admired Romantic Ireland, not its opposite, which he identified in "September 1913" with the lower middle class, fumbling in a "greasy till" or adding "the halfpence to the pence". What he valued most was strength of personality and individual heroism, or as Renan once remarked in his autobiography: "I only care for characters of an absolute idealism." (Renan, 1892: 113) His nationalism was never pure therefore and he would have had difficulties subscribing even to the "simplest definition" propounded recently by Perry Anderson (following Thomas Masaryk, the Czech national leader): "any outlook that treats the nation as the highest political value" (Anderson, 2002: 5).

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[5] For a trenchant critique of Hobsbawm, see Jim MacLaughlin, *Reimagining the Nation-State: The Contested Terrains of Nation-Building* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 101-15.

'DO NATIONS HAVE NAVELS?'

Historical definitions of nationalism are still the subject of disagreement among the experts. In a recent eloquent summary, Anthony D. Smith inserts a frame around the topic:

> A single red line traverses the history of the modern world from the fall of the Bastille to the fall of the Berlin Wall.... The name of the red line is nationalism.... Historians may differ over the exact moment of nationalism's birth, but social scientists are clear: nationalism is a modern movement and ideology, which emerged in the latter half of the eighteenth century in Western Europe and America, and which, after its apogee in two world wars, is now beginning to decline and give way to global forces which transcend the boundaries of nation-states. (Smith, 1998: 1)

The neatness here commends itself. But not everything began in the eighteenth century. Irish claims to nationhood stem from a much longer history, and for Northern republicans such claims did not come to an end in 1989. In a witty Tree-of-Jesse passage in his nineteenth-century historical novel *Glenanaar* (1902), Canon Sheehan underlines the essential unity of Irish history governed in this case by the revenge motif:

> Cromwell begat massacres and burning; and massacres and burning begat reprisals; and reprisals begat Penal Laws; and Penal Laws begat insurrection; and insurrection begat the Union; and the Union begat outlawry; and outlawry begat Whiteboyism; and Whiteboyism begat informers and judicial murders; and judicial murders begat revenge. (Sheehan, 1920: 129)[6]

Like the Old Testament Jews, the Irish are tied to a patriarchal sense of history, and, whether they are heroes or victims, engraved on their culture is the word continuity. "Keep the fires of the nation burning" was Parnell's phrase used as a motto by *The Spark*, a revolutionary newspaper in the years leading up to the Easter Rising. In *Ireland A Nation* (1919), Robert Lynd, sketched in the background to Easter 1916 with four chapters on "The Historical Thread". In the Irish context, the sense of nationhood is not so much discovered as stimulated by contact with oppression and prejudice. When asked to identify his nation, Macmorris —his petulance a sign of some latent nationalism— reflects in part the expected Elizabethan response, that the Irish fought for Ireland, not for Kings of England.[7] Such inconvenient attitudes are frequently overlooked by theoreticians of nationalism, but what is striking about an older generation writing about the Easter Rising is their frequent recourse to the issue of social inferiority. "Those who had been bred in an atmosphere of social inferiority began to come into their own," writes M.J. MacManus in his biography of de Valera (1947: 347). In an article entitled "A Terrible Beauty is Born" and published in the *Irish Times* in 1975, Liam de Paor offers a similar observation: "The self-contempt, which is apparent in so many Irish expressions of political and social ideas from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, was suddenly checked." (De Paor, 1998: 143) And Ernie O'Malley in the classic account of the War of Independence also speaks of "self-respect", to which he adds the soldier's supplement: "Only by fighting had Ireland ever gained its own self-respect." (O'Malley, 1967: 50)

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[6] Canon P.A. Sheehan, *Glenanaar: A Story of Irish Life* (1902; London: Longmans, Green, 1929), 42. A little later in the novel, the pattern is rehearsed using opposite terms, with the word Union capitalised: "[J]ustice begat confidence; and confidence begat toleration; and toleration begat mutual understanding; and mutual understanding begat love; and love begat Union which we all desire." (page 72)

However, it *is* the case that the eighteenth century injected something special into Irish nationalism, and this in two respects: one is the civic nationalism of the ruling group, the Protestant Ascendancy, and the other is the emerging ethnic nationalism associated with the Catholic dispossessed majority. According to the historian George O'Brien, in eighteenth-century Ireland there were two nations —"the historic and the hidden", one associated with the Protestant Ascendancy, the other with Catholicism (O'Brien, 1936: 74). The modern face of Dublin, with its beautiful Custom House designed by James Gandon overlooking the river and its fine eighteenth-century squares and town-houses, was constructed in this period, and it gave expression to a civic pride worthy of the city that was ranked second to London in the Kingdom. That it was based in part on dispossession of the majority population —the Penal Laws denied Catholics access to the professions, to education, and even to training their own clergy in Ireland— ensured that modern Irish nationalism was impelled more by dreams of the future than bricks and mortar of the present.

As for Smith's metaphor of birth, this is especially persuasive, as we have seen with Joyce's Bloom, in the Irish context. The subtitle of *1922*, Tom Garvin's classic study of Irish nationalism, is "The Birth of Irish Democracy" (Garvin, 1996). More recently, in his discussion of the Belfast Agreement, Rick Wilford quite naturally has a section entitled "Difficult Birth" (Wilford, 2001: 6). Modern Ireland has witnessed at least two colossal births. There was a short-lived birth in the eighteenth century with the Irish Parliament which met on College Green in Dublin from 1782 until 1800 when the Act of Union returned Ireland to rule from London. Known to history as Grattan's Parliament, it was the inspiration largely of Irish Protestants who took their cue in part from the American War of Independence and from the French Revolution and the Rights of Man. Outside Parliament, it was accompanied by a more militant form of nationalism, and in 1798 the Protestant-led United Irishmen under the leadership of Theobald Wolfe Tone took up arms to break the link with Britain. The Rising was suppressed, and, two years later, the Irish Parliament was abolished by the Act of Union. The second birth had a long gestation period but it was delayed for over a century or more until, if we listen to Yeats, the Easter Rising of 1916 —not for nothing does Yeats's poem end on a famous birth-note, resonating not only against 1916 but also 1798. The birth pangs to the new Ireland included not only the Land War (1879-82) and the Home Rule Bill of 1886, but also smaller affairs such as the activities of the '98 Centennial Commemoration Committee, whose executive included the old Fenian John O'Leary, Maud Gonne, and Yeats himself.

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[7] J.O. Bartley speculates that Macmorris belonged to one of the older settler families in Ireland who substituted the Gaelic 'Mac' for the Norman 'Fitz' in their surnames. He may also have been educated in England. See *Teague, Shenkin and Sawney* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1954), 16.

What exactly was born at Easter 1916 was not at the time —or indeed since— very clear. Ray Ryan places two dates round his recent study of Irish and Scottish culture and nationhood "1966-2000", 1966 being the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising and the year which also witnessed the destruction of Nelson's Column. In a curious 'reverse-swing' sentence, designed it has to be said to draw connections, he inadvertently reveals something of the confusion that continues to surround the Rising: "When an attempt is made to cleanse the landscape of nationalism ... it is hard not to view the process as the psychological equivalent of blowing up Nelson's Column: removing the visible indications of an oppressive past is no guarantee that liberty can mean liberation." (Ryan, 2002: 290-1) In *The Two Irelands 1912-1939* (1998), David Fitzpatrick divides his material chronologically into two halves and, as if in doubt, calls the first "What Revolution? Ireland 1912-1922". Sean O'Casey, who refused to submerge his socialism under nationalism, remained sceptical: "Things had changed, but not utterly; and no terrible beauty was to be born. Short Mass was still the favourite service, and Brian Boru's harp still bloomed on the bottles of beer." (O'Casey, 1980: 3) In *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* (1985), the Ulster Protestant McIlwaine dismisses the Rising as a post office robbery with the spineless Fenians walking in to post a letter and kicking out all the female counter assistants: "Disgrace to their sex, the whole bastarding lot of them, I say." (McGuinness, 175) *Dublin Opinion* in the 1930s carried a sketch by Charles E. Kelly of an election rally. A bed is hauled toward a podium where an elderly politician is speaking. "What's this?" the politician wants to know. "It's the bed you were under in 1916!" is the reply from the crowd (Collins & Kelly, 1937: 172).

The more lofty view is that when the Proclamation of the Republic was read out by Patrick Pearse on the steps of the General Post Office on Easter Monday 1916, the event marked the birth of the Irish republic. In answer to Ernest Gellner's unorthodox question origins and the body politic —"Do Nations Have Navels?"— the Irish nationalist could legitimately reply yes, its spot being identical to the General Post Office (Gellner, 1997: 90-101). Certainly, everything conspired to mark the occasion. The colour was appropriately green, the place a non-military building in the centre of Dublin, near Nelson's Pillar, in the heart of Joyce's Hibernian metropolis, the destination and departure-point for the newly-laid tram system, and the time was the most important feast in the Church's calendar. "Surrection!" is Joyce's word for the event in *Finnegans Wake*, a combination of insurrection and resurrection. "Eireweeker to the wohld bludyn world" (Joyce, 1968: 593: 2-3, 6-7). From Eire to the whole bloody world. Tellingly, the author of "Easter 1916" did not avail himself of the Christian significance of the Rising but for his famous collocation "terrible beauty" took his cue from the Godless Nietzsche. The older Joyce, however, with his Catholic background intact, could see the liturgical significance of the Proclamation, that it was indeed like the Pope's Easter message to the world "*Urbi et Orbi*" (to the city of Rome and the world), only this time the city was *bludyn*, an anagram of Dublin, and the reception (*Earwicker*, the earwig) possibly weaker than when it was first heard on the airwaves, as it were, in 1916.

1890S: WINDS OF CHANGE

To return to the 1890s, the clarion-call, the wake-up call, for modern Irish cultural nationalism was made by Douglas Hyde in a famous essay entitled "The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland" (1892):

> I have no hesitation at all in saying that every Irish-feeling Irishman, who hates the reproach of West-Britonism, should set himself to encourage the efforts which are being made to keep alive our once great national tongue. The losing of it is our greatest blow, and the sorest stroke that the rapid Anglicisation of Ireland has inflicted upon us. In order to de-Anglicise ourselves we must at once arrest the decay of the language. We must bring pressure upon our politicians not to snuff it out by their tacit discouragement merely because they do not happen themselves to understand it. We must arouse some spark of patriotic inspiration among the peasantry who still use the language and put an end to the shameful state of feeling ... which makes young men and women blush and hang their heads when overheard speaking their own language. (Hyde, 1894: 136-7)

The wake-up call worked, for as Horace Plunkett noted in his Preface to *Ireland in the New Century* (1904): "Those who have known Ireland for the last dozen years cannot have failed to notice the advent of a wholly new spirit." (Plunkett, 1905: x.) Or as George Moore impishly suggested in conversation with Edward Martyn:

> "Ninety-nine is the beginning of the Celtic Renaissance," said Edward.
>
> "I am glad to hear it; the Celt wants a renaissance, and badly; he has been going down in the world for the last two thousand years." (Moore, 1911: 42)

The year following Hyde's essay, an Irish-language organisation, the Gaelic League, was founded to foster the growth of the Irish language, and language classes assembled throughout the country. According to Hyde, Ireland's distinctiveness resided in a series of cultural markers to which he was keen to see a return: Irish surnames and Irish first names, Irish place-names, Irish traditional music, Gaelic football, Connemara home-spun tweed, Anglo-Irish literature rather than English books. "Every house should have a copy of Moore and Davis." (Hyde, 1894: 159) What he feared most was a "nation of imitators ... alive only to second-hand assimilation" (Hyde, 1894: 160). Interestingly —and it is an insight rarely noticed— behind Hyde's insistence on Irish distinctiveness was also an awareness that Ireland was "the most assimilative … nation in Europe" (Hyde, 1894: 160).

Language and culture provided the driving force behind claims to nation status. Hyde had suggested how the present could be transformed through active participation by the people. In 1894 Plunkett founded the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society to enable small farmers to pool resources and to benefit from the establishment of creameries (arguably one of the most distinctive features of Irish rural life in the twentieth century). It was a time for the practical imagination to flourish, for the spread of all things Celtic, for Celtic crafts, Celtic lettering and borders, for Irish books, for completing a task pioneered, as Jeanne Sheehy reminds us, by antiquarians from the 1830s (Sheehy, 1980: *passim*). Given this background, it is perhaps not surprising to learn that Yeats, the greatest poet Ireland has ever produced, the visionary with the dark dreaming eyes, not only helped found the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in 1904 but, as a Senator in the 1920s, also chaired the committee that decided on the design of Ireland's currency.

If the nation for some was a practical venture, for others it remained essentially of the future. In "Nationality or Cosmopolitanism", Yeats's occult friend George Russell suggests another take on nationalism —an imagined community that Benedict Anderson might well have included in his influential study of the topic:

> Every Irishman forms some vague ideal of his country, born from his reading of history, or from contemporary politics, or from imaginative intuition; and this Ireland in the mind it is, not the actual Ireland, which kindles his enthusiasm. For this he works and makes sacrifices…. We are yet before our dawn…. We can see, however, as the ideal of Ireland grows from mind to mind, it tends to assume the character of a sacred land. (Russell, 1921: 5)

As can be observed in the various extracts in "1890s: Shadows, Moods and Arguments", the first section of my Cork *Reader*, for the generation that created the modern Irish Revival in the 1890s and 1900s, Ireland was both an idea and an ideal. Appropriately, the (vague) umbrella title for a 1901 collection of essays by Moore, Hyde, Russell, O'Grady, D.P. Moran, and Yeats, was *Ideals in Ireland*.

Everything —especially the past— pointed to the future. On their estates in the west of Ireland, Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn planned with Yeats and Moore the establishment of what would become a national theatre. Every folktale collected by Yeats and Lady Gregory was further ammunition in the struggle for separate identity. When Moore returned to Dublin to live in 1901 he painted the door of his house in Ely Place green as if nationalism was now on the agenda, his own included. His collection of stories *The Untilled Field* (1902), whose title was taken from Shelley's revolutionary poem "Sonnet: England in 1819", was his contribution to the future, couched as a critique of the Irish present. Russell gendered the discussion by comparing the national spirit to "a beautiful woman" who "cannot or will not reveal itself wholly while a coarse presence is near, an unwelcome stranger in possession of the home" (Russell, 1901: 22). At Kilteragh, the house he had built at Foxrock near Dublin in 1906, Plunkett entertained all the leading opinion-formers and social reformers from Britain, Ireland, and the United States including his cousin the novelist Emily Lawless, Russell, Shaw, H.G. Wells, W.T. Stead, Lord Grey, the U.S. Commissioner for Forestry Gifford Pinchot, J.P. Mahaffy, the Provost of Trinity (Digby, 1949: *passim*). Even commemorations such as the 1798 centennial celebrations were in essence about the future, as indeed were popular ballads such as Ethna Carbery's "Rody McCorley", whose second stanza was no doubt a comfort to those who died "today" for "Mother Ireland":

> Oh Ireland, Mother Ireland,
> You love them still the best,
> The fearless brave who fighting fall
> Upon your hapless breast;
> But never a one of all your dead
> More bravely fell in fray,
> Than he who marches to his fate
> On the Bridge of Toome today. (Carbery, 1902: 82)

Carbery believed in "thinkin' long", the title of a poem told from a female perspective about a young man who went away to fight for the "soul of Ireland" (Carbery, 1902: 67). Memory and rehearsal were in the air, filling the heads of poets with dreams of battles and men of action. In the first poem of Yeats's *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899), the invisible army of the Sidhe or fairies are gathering again while in the apocalyptic poem "The Valley of the Black Pig" "unknown perishing armies beat about my head" (Yeats, 1903: 1, 35). As if to complement Yeats's Nineties swirling white-and-gold cover design, Carbery's *The Four Winds of Erinn* (1902) carried a more focussed Celtic lettering and motifs. But, as the martial lines of "Rody McCorley" convey, the verse was no less forceful in its clamour for resolution outside of poetry. In "Mo Chraoibhín Cno" (my cluster of nuts or brown-haired girl), a poem which includes the line "Oh! famine-wasted, fever-burnt, they faded like the snow", Ireland is addressed directly as both an invocation and a challenge:

> A Sword of Light hath pierced the dark, our eyes have seen the star.
> O Mother, leave the ways of sleep now days of promise are:
> The rusty spears upon your walls are stirring to and fro,
> In dreams they front uplifted shields Then wake
> Mo Chraoibhín Cno! (Carbery, 1902: 9)

Even what appear to be fairly empty symbolic phrases had the potential at this period to become weapons in a (future) war. Thus, Sword of Light, translated into Irish as *An Claidheamh Soluis*, was the title of the Gaelic League newspaper founded in 1899 and edited by Eoin MacNeill and, later, by Patrick Pearse. Constantly, throughout Carbery's volume, what we have displayed is a barely disguised form of political rallying, from the Dedication to the Gaelic League of

Argentina, to the phrase at the end of "Shiela Ní Gara" how "the hour is drawing near", to the lament for the Irish emigrant in "The Passing of the Gael", which ends with the line "Oh! Kathaleen Ní Houlihan, your way's a thorny way!" (Carbery, 1902: 110). If such forms of expression seem less persuasive to us today, that is because in part political independence was followed almost immediately by civil war and in part, after the demise of 'the 1860s generation', it became increasingly unfashionable to address Ireland in such symbolic terms.[8]

ENGLISH AS WE SPEAK IT IN IRELAND

Checking himself as if to confirm his first impression, Broadbent in *John Bull's Other Island* imagines Haffigan speaks in the true brogue: "But he spoke — he behaved just like an Irishman." To which Doyle, in one of the most apposite speeches in the play, replies:

> Like an Irishman!! Man alive, don't you know that all this top-of-the-morning and broth-of-a-boy and more-power-to-your-elbow business is got up in England to fool you, like the Albert Hall concerts of Irish music? No Irishman ever talks like that in Ireland, or ever did, or ever will. (Shaw, 1931: 81)

Part of the achievement of cultural nationalism in Ireland has been to fill the stage with authentic Irish voices so that today Doyle's venom seems slightly misplaced if only because the Broadbents of this world have largely disappeared. Indeed, with the advent of the Chieftains and other performers, there is also nothing fake about Irish concerts in the Albert Hall — though what Shaw would have made of Riverdance is another matter. If elsewhere in postcolonial literature, the Empire Writes Back —an expression which has been used to characterise the way colonised, or former colonised, people have written about the struggle for redress, to get their own back— in Ireland the issue takes on a different character, of the Empire Talking Back, and this is especially true of Irish drama.

'Back' is the crucial word with both Wilde and Shaw, whose one-liners reverberate around the stage at times like lost boomerangs. "As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life." So Algernon observes at the beginning of *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), where the double meaning of forte —as both strength and loudness— and the opposition between science and Life with a capital letter anticipate two key devices in the play, namely doubling and contrast or similarity and difference. "The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!" (Wilde, 1976: 321, 326) Here is talk —or, what amounts to the same thing, dramatic monologues— spilling over from afternoon tea in West London studios and drawing rooms, polished and elegant, designed as much to impress as to carry a social message.

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[8] Carbery, along with Alice Milligan, founded in 1896 the Northern nationalist newspaper with its traditional image of Ireland for a title —*The Shan Van Vocht* (Poor Old Woman). The "1860s generation" is my own term, but it is not without interest to note the names of those mentioned in this article who were born in this decade: Hyde (1860), Katharine Tynan (1861), Yeats (1865), Carbery (1866), Alice Milligan (1866), George Russell (1867), "John Eglinton" (1868), Constance Markievicz (1868).

The dialogue keeps running as if it were a non-stop performance, banishing all doubt or embarrassment or depth of character. Drop the 'a' and you have the name Ernest, keep the 'a' and you have the combination of moral attribute and the contemporary gay scene. Let the audience determine where to place the significance, whether it's Worthing where he wrote the play and after whom presumably Jack or John is named, or bunburying which covers a multitude of sins for the more conventional Algernon or the more deviant Ernest.

By all accounts, Yeats was Wilde's equal as a conversationalist, but he needed the help of Lady Gregory to mould his dialogue into something which could pass for natural speech on the stage. On a famous occasion when he was wintering with Ezra Pound at Stone Cottage in Sussex during the Great War, the American poet thought he heard the wind blowing down the chimney but then realised it was "Uncle William" upstairs composing "that had made a great Peeeeacock / in the proide of his oiye".[9] Yeats was compelled, as he tells us in one of his retrospective essays, to *hammer* his thoughts into unity (Yeats, 1973: 263); they rarely came like leaves on the tree. He enjoyed more success with poetry than dramatic dialogue, for the lyrical impulse there found its natural outlet where the emotional charge is held down or embedded by syntactic structures which are closer to written than to spoken English. In recalling the mood of the years 1892-1902, Yeats chose for his title "Dramatis Personae", as if indeed everyone was playing a part. In a revealing sentence comparing his own "sensuous, concrete, rhythmical" mind with Moore's, which was "argumentative, abstract, diagrammatic", he explained: "In later years, through much knowledge of the stage, through the exfoliation of my own style, I learnt that occasional prosaic words gave the impression of an active man speaking." (Yeats, 1936: 52)

Wilde, for Yeats, was the active man, a judgment which seems a little surprising today, but then Yeats understood better than most commentators Wilde's personality and formative Irish background. "We are too poetical to be poets," Wilde told Yeats in the late 1880s. "We are a nation of brilliant failures, but we are the greatest talkers since the Greeks." (Yeats, 1977: 135) In Robert Sherard's *The Life of Oscar Wilde* (1906), the remark is prefaced by the observation: "Speaking of the Irish, he once said, referring to himself, in that self-accusing way which was one of the pathetic traits of his character…." (Sherard, 1906: 295). For Yeats, it is not so much a personal as a national trait on display here: "He commended and dispraised himself during dinner by attributing characteristics like his own to his country….". Wilde's remark struck a chord with Yeats who in the early 1920s (when he wrote "Four Years 1887-1891") was constructing a system in which to place historical periods, personality types, and exemplary individuals. But, interestingly, when we read *A Vision* (1925), the Irish dimension tends to be lost in the much larger cycles of Western history, and Wilde appears at Phase Nineteen, along with Byron, d'Annunzio, "and a certain actress", where the Will manifests itself as Assertive Man and the Body of Fate as enforced failure of action (Yeats, 1977: 147-8).

The attempt to bring into the same field of play —as here between the Irish and the

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[9] Lines from Pound's *Pisan Cantos*. See my *Yeats's Worlds: Ireland, England and the Poetic Imagination*(London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) for copy of original typescript (page 175).

Greeks, failures in action but great talkers, character and action, personal and national, aptitude and writing, art and life, sincerity and the doctrine of the mask — is what distinguishes Wilde and Yeats. If Wilde had lived into middle age and was asked to systematise his thoughts, scattered as they are amid hundreds of aphorisms, his whimsical instinct would have got the better of him. When *Salome* ran into problems with the Censor in 1892 on the ground that it introduced Biblical characters, Wilde declared in an interview he would settle in France: "I am not English. I am Irish —which is quite another thing." (Harris, 1918: 125-6) It is this spirit of whimsy which resurfaces in the incident when Beckett was asked by a French interviewer if he were English: "Au contraire" was his answer. Most commentators infer that Beckett is defining Irishness by what wasn't English, but I think it isn't so much the contrast on display here but Wilde's "quite another thing". The *contraire* is thus closer to contr*ary*. Wilde and Beckett are defining themselves not by the idea of a conventional opposite but by something wholly different. Because he was governed by systems of contrast which worked against the exercise of free will, the single-minded Yeats never got close to such a position. For Yeats, the Irish, like Berkeley, are not-English, but this is not Wilde's "quite another thing".

In the sucking stone sequence in *Molloy* (1954), Molloy at the seaside is deeply perplexed by a logistical/mathematical/philosophical problem about how to suck in turn sixteen different stones, which are distributed equally in the four pockets of his greatcoat, without sucking them twice. After over two thousand words of deliberation seeking a solution, he confesses: "But deep down I didn't give a tinker's curse", throwing away all the stones but one, which he then proceeded to switch from one pocket to another before either losing it or throwing it away or swallowing it (Beckett, 1977: 69-74). Behind everything Beckett wrote is the stance, attitude and identity embodied in his "au contraire". When stop-searched he has an answer, just as in history, when questioned by the gentry and those in authority, the Irish country people knew how to answer back by recourse to the unexpected. Beckett's Irish voice constantly intrudes into his writings.[10] In his reference to a "tinker's curse", he switches to an informal register. Elsewhere in this sequence Molloy reaches a temporary solution which he describes as "sound", another commonly heard word in Ireland expressing approval for a person or an action. Always his language is more than simple texture or local colouring and seems to belong to a form of slippage, an Irish sense of defiance that can then be seen as underlying all his work.

By the time Beckett put pen to paper, the English reader had been banished from over the shoulder of the Irish writer. This above all else was the great historical achievement of the Revival from the 1890s to the 1920s. That it wasn't effected all at once is clear from Somerville and Ross's humorous portraits of Irish speech in the stories of *Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.* (1899), where substituting 'i' for 'e' in words such as devil and tent and an apostrophe for the 'g' in words ending in –ing, inserting 'h' into words such as porter, true and drive, adding a few "says I to meself", and spelling words as they might be pronounced such as "obstackles" —all convey the attitude that Irish country people were still fun to listen to and to ridicule. The breakthrough came with Hyde's translations of the love songs of Connaught, which paved the way for the Kiltartanese dialect of Lady Gregory and the speech of Synge's plays which was "as fully flavoured as a nut or apple".[11] It was then possible for 'home-grown' writers such as Padraic Colum and George Fitzmaurice to provide a double-take on the deprivation of their fellow-countrymen without the need to humour or defend, and in Fitzmaurice's case in heightened language we associate with Synge. A telling phrase from the opening scene of *The Dandy Dolls* (1914) encapsulates a whole moment. A stranger enters inquiring for the man of the house, and, when informed by Cauth Carmody that her husband is "engaged", he replies: "What sort of talk is that in a cabin black with soot?" (Fitzmaurice, 1967: 21).

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[10] *All That Fall* (1957) is Beckett's most Irish play in the sense in which Irish voices can be heard throughout.

Cultural nationalism is a useful umbrella term, but, as we have seen, it has a complicated history and groundwork. Virtually no Irish writer from Jonathan Swift to John Banville sings from the same hymn-sheet. There is of course a chorus which can be heard singing at times in unison as in the 1890s, but, in spite of the cul-de-sac represented by the Civil War, what is worth stressing are the different voices, some oppositional, others muffled and indistinct, which belong to the development of cultural nationalism. Hyde advocated the anglicisation of Ireland but resigned from the Gaelic League when it took a political turn; Yeats never learnt his national language, thought in separatist terms, but all the time wrote in English. Moreover, we shouldn't forget that some voices in certain of their works resist incorporation into something called 'Irish cultural nationalism'. This is particularly so with someone like William Orpen, who is justly regarded as one of the leading modern Irish artists, but whose most remarkable series of sketches —*An Onlooker in France 1917-1919* (1921)— grew out of a British Government commission to act as a Great War artist. Interestingly, the first building to be completed after the destruction of O'Connell Street during the Easter Rising was Clery's department store, which was modelled on Selfridge's in London, itself designed by the American architect Daniel Burnham and in the modern Chicago manner.[12] Of the figures mentioned in this article, O'Grady, Moore, Plunkett, Eglinton, Russell —all for one reason or another abandoned Ireland for England, but the ideals of cultural nationalism lived on, and from their exiled status in Devon and Paris, O'Casey, Joyce and Beckett breathed new life into the matter of Ireland.

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[11] This was the phrase Synge himself used in his preface to *The Playboy of the Western World*, and he is really talking about his own work. Examples of Hyde, Lady Gregory, and Synge can be found in my *Irish Writing in the Twentieth Century: A Reader* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000).

[12] See Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture 1900-1940* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1991), 76-8. In Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1999), Henry —on instructions by Michel Collins—buys a suit in Clery's after the funeral of Thomas Ashe in 1917 (see p. 191). I think this must be an error on the author's part.

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Transitions in Irish Miscellanies between 1923 and 1940: *The Irish* Statesman and *The Bell*

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ABSTRACT

Between 1923 and 1940 a variety of political and cultural events took place in Ireland, including the formation of the Free State, the establishment of the 1937 constitution by Eamon de Valera, and the adoption of a policy of neutrality in the Second World War. The effects of these changes are traced in the processes of production of two related periodicals, *The Irish Statesman* (1923-30) and *The Bell* (1940-54). The differences and similarities between the editors of these journals, George Russell (Æ) and Sean O'Faolain, are discussed in the context of the intellectual history of the period, as are the processes of influence and reaction between them. The historical evolution of the miscellany as a specific periodical genre is considered, together with its influence upon the form and content of these publications. It is argued that particular audiences were created for these periodicals in post revolutionary Ireland and that they were both able, in different ways, to exert a benign influence on the development of the new nation.

KEYWORDS: periodical; Ireland; miscellany; journal; genre; Russell (Æ); O'Faolain; *The Bell*; *Irish Statesman.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Between 1923, the date of the first issue of *The Irish Statesman,* and the initial publication of *The Bell* in 1940 there lies a space of difference, generated by historical circumstance. Among the defining events, which alter the contexts within which these two periodicals are produced, are

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IJES, vol. 2 (2), 2002, pp. 23-37

such major interventions as the creation of the new Free State in Ireland, its early struggles for an independent self-definition, and the eventual electoral and cultural dominance of the government of Eamon de Valera. This in turn led to the enshrinement of the state's formal values in its 1937 constitution, the operation of a literary censorship and the adoption of a policy of neutrality in the Second World War. I would like to trace some of the effects of these changes on the process of writing, editing, and producing these periodicals and to suggest how a specific periodical genre, the Irish miscellany, is first developed, derived from English models, and then adapted to social and historical circumstances. I will place these events in the context of the intellectual history of this particular period. We will see how a process of influence operated between the two periodicals and how they impacted on different audiences.

II. THE EDITORS: SIMILARITIES

Both the sympathy and the tensions between two overlapping generations in Ireland are well illustrated in the writings of the editors of these journals. George Russell (1867-1935) and Sean O'Faolain (1900-1990) had many similar preoccupations about the cultural condition of the mass of the people of Ireland in their respective times. Some significant differences between them will be discussed later, but at this stage I wish to concentrate attention on the positions they held in common. Both editors were deeply concerned with the condition of contemporary Irish culture. Russell, writing with characteristic grandiloquence and deploying what John Eglinton described as his "maieutic" style (Gibbon, 1937: 1), seeks to bring forth new concepts and to set out a cultural manifesto for the new Ireland.

> A nation is cultivated only in so far as the average man, not the exceptional person, is cultivated and has knowledge of the thought, imagination and intellectual history of his nation [...] The civic sense must awaken rapidly and our concern be about the quality of life in our country. There is really nothing else that matters but that. Governments exist for this; literature and the arts exist for this, economic enterprise exists for this and the quality of life evolved is their justification. (Gibbon, 1937: 381)

A similar insistence on the need for an inclusive Irish culture marks O'Faolain's stance, enunciated in an early editorial in *The Bell,* towards the need for an "active periodical open to *everybody*". This desire for inclusiveness leads to his declaration that "country people are fine: they tell us the whole story from morning to dark" and underlines his assertion that they are better contributors to his magazine than more academic writers, offering "vague woolly articles, all personal opinion and no study" (1941a: 5-6).

Clifford Geertz describes culture as "not a power, something to which social events, behaviours or processes can be casually attributed: it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly —that is thickly— described" (1973: 14). The official cultural context within which Russell and O'Faolain both operated was one influenced by the desire to differentiate the new Irish state from its predecessors and especially from England. Ireland was envisaged as

Catholic and puritanical, and as deriving its culture from the Gaelic past, from an ancient land of saints and heroes. Russell, in a phrase anticipating Benedict Anderson, aimed to define the nation as "an imagination common to millions of people" (Davies, 1977: 138; Anderson, 1990: 6). But both editors were concerned with the insularity that this accepted but reactionary vision of Ireland could be seen to encourage, entailing the risk of "a prevailing national narcissism" (Brown, 1985: 121).

Russell frequently insisted, therefore, on the definition of the culture being broadened to include external contexts. In July 1929 his editorial comments on the new Labour administration in London, on the issues arising from British and French withdrawal from the Rhineland and on the restructuring of relations between the Free State and Russia (1929: 363-65). Similarly O'Faolain, in a series of editorials under the heading, "One World", adopted a confident cosmopolitan agenda, quoting world statesmen such as Mackenzie King or European philosophers like Benedetto Croce, dealing with such questions as relations within the British Commonwealth or the need for a broader consensus in postwar Europe (1944a; 1-9; 1945a: 277-289; 1945b: 461-471; 1945c:97-105). One example of his vigorous rhetoric on this theme will suffice:

> Is the reader the sort of Republican who wishes his country to take her part in this terrible evolution of European civilisation which is and always may be a recurring series of periods of achievement and defeat, of full living and hard enduring, of rebuilding and new starts, of Peace in which men create splendidly and interruptions of every kind which they struggle to control, avert or, once again, endure until they can once more take up the golden thread? If he is that kind of Irishman he has the right to speak. (1945a: 281)

Both editors, then, shared highly compatible views on the state of Irish culture at these different historical junctures, especially in respect of two crucial issues: their advocacy of the need for developing a more inclusive culture within the new state and their concerns about avoiding isolationism.

III. INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

The intellectual borders of Ireland were, in any case, always porous and open to influence from Europe and Britain. Contemporary political questions such as the decline of Liberalism, linked to the rise of nationalism and broader cultural issues such as modernism and its relationship to modernisation, entailing the alienation of many intellectuals from their own societies, were also reflected in twentieth-century Irish debates. However, the Irish tradition of 'thinking otherwise' ensured a different emphasis upon them (Kearney, 1985: 37). At this stage I would like to relate the work of Russell and O'Faolain to a powerful tradition of 'organic' literary and cultural criticism that was developing in England in the mid-twentieth century, especially associated with the names of T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis and Raymond Williams. Many of Sean O'Faolain's preoccupations in Ireland in the 1940s, such as his devotion to realism, his insistence on 'Life' as against 'abstractions' as the criterion for critical judgement, and his interests in the interplay between tradition and the role of culture in society were shared with Leavis and Williams (O'Faolain, 1940: 9). As the editor of *Scrutiny,* Leavis had sought to develop Matthew Arnold's critical practice by placing primacy on the moral meanings of literary works and insisting upon the role of culture in civilisation and the need for intellectual stringency in the study of literature (Leavis, 1932: 24). His deepest insights were based on a strongly felt if somewhat nostalgic organicism, derived from critical close readings of literary texts and the consequential development of a cultured and trained sensibility which, echoing Arnold in *The Function of Criticism*, could freely play on all subjects it touched (Collini, 1993: 37). This stance brought him into frequent bruising conflicts, especially with the critical Brahminism of Bloomsbury (perhaps unfairly associated by him with T. S. Eliot and his journal *Criterion*) as well as with Marxist literary critics (Mulhern, 1985: 118) and, again, with the scientific establishment during the "Two Cultures" controversy with C.P. Snow in 1959 (Trilling, 1966: 145-77).

However, Raymond Williams developed Leavis's thinking further, initially along Marxist lines, especially working towards a new discipline of cultural studies, identifying "structures of feeling" that he saw being derived from a state of "deep community that makes communication possible" (1984: 63). This concept of a society based on a realist grasp of the continuity of affective and kinship ties brought him into conflict both with right-wing critics and also with many traditional Marxists. As the editor himself of a left-wing critical review, *Politics and Letters,* Williams argued that "there are two primary tasks for this journal: the creation of an intelligent reading public; and secondly, the creation of a group which could and would intervene politically" (1947: 25). These tasks —reinforcing community, audience creation and creating political impact— bear a close resemblance to the key missions espoused by George Russell in *The Irish Statesman* and by Sean O'Faolain in *The Bell.*

Williams conceded the validity of the work of Marxist critics such as Lukàcs and Goldmann in opposing literature as a major affirmative response to the socially repressive forms of industrial capitalism. He also debated the role of realism as "a positive contribution to the process of understanding 'social reality'" (1977: 2, 50). Although his sophisticated discussion of the term in *Keywords* demonstrated his awareness of the structuralist critique of realism, Williams's thinking at this stage stopped short of incorporating the work of Althusser, Lévi-Strauss, Barthes or the linguistic theorists (1990b: 257-62). In this respect Williams represents a crucial shift in the history of literary criticism in his era. It should be remembered that O'Faolain was also a professional literary critic, the author of books about the short story and the novel, espousing a controversial "realist aesthetic", and that his colleague and eventual successor, Peadar O'Donnell, was that rare bird in Ireland of the time, a committed Marxist theorist and practitioner (Smyth, 1998: 85).

The intellectual positions taken by both Russell and O'Faolain deal with contemporary issues that were currently being debated in the first half of the twentieth century. To some degree, indeed, they appear to me to anticipate Raymond Williams's notion of a common culture, demanding wide participation throughout any given society and placing its ultimate emphasis on the idea of natural growth (Williams, 1990a: 325). As Terry Eagleton has pointed out, this concept retrieves from the organic metaphor a sense of "its radical potential" (2000: 120). Both Russell and O'Faolain are thoughtful liberals with a well-developed sense of the kind of "organic society" they would like to see in post-revolutionary Ireland. Marie Arndt describes O'Faolain as an "undisputed liberal" whose "highly complex and fluid intellectual position" emerged from the extent to which his established principles were under siege (Arndt, 2001: 239). And both Russell and O'Faolain chose to express ideas that (however innocuous they may appear today) ranked as subversive in post-revolutionary Ireland, using for this purpose the medium of the miscellany periodical. Within this long-established but essentially elastic form they were able to encompass a wide variety of different literary modes: editorials, essays, documentaries, poetry, reviews, political opinion and letters.

IV. THE EDITORS: DIFFERENCES

It is difficult to decide whether the similarities or the differences between these editorials, separated in time by seventeen eventful years, are more significant. Let us for now, however, examine some differences. Russell's appeal is to tradition as a binding source of unity between classes and regions. Simultaneously he looks to the past and evokes the future. He has some specific targets and policies in mind: the co-operative movement and agriculture and the need for wider cultural development. In 1911, writing to St. John Ervine he declares that "I am trying hard to socialise Ireland, but I call it co-operation" (Eglinton, 1937: 83). He wanted, maybe unrealistically, "to create a popular culture which would give the people the taste, learning and culture that would replace the rifle of revolutionary days with books and the arts" (Davis, 1977: 139). The lofty and inspirational tone reminds us of Yeats's Anglo-Irish rhetoric: the people of Swift and Burke are being rallied. By way of contrast, O'Faolain's writing is dominated by the present —any future he evokes is not more than three issues away, uncertain and in the hands of yet-to-be discovered writers. The past is dead. Thus any appeal to tradition is effectively forestalled. Life in today's Ireland is experimentally fresh and new and the editor's modernising mission already peeps through his *faux-naïf* assertion, in his opening editorial, that "*The Bell* has, in the usual sense of the word, no policy" (1940: 5).

Indeed, a comparison of the opening editorials of each journal is highly suggestive. Russell (1923, 3-6) desires to avoid personal bitterness and to "look upon all living in Ireland, North or South, as one people". He knows that "the dream of hope which precedes action is often nobler than the realisation" but still "hopes that this journal may help to create alluring images of the future society". He stresses the national importance of agriculture but also points out that there are very few bookshops in Ireland outside the main centres of population. He advocates co-operative associations as centres "not only of economic but of intellectual and cultural life". He will "endeavour to interpret the new self governing Ireland to Irishmen". In his peroration, freely mixing Enlightenment and Romantic rhetoric, he invokes the names of Swift, Sheridan, Berkeley, Goldsmith and Burke, while declaring that he "wants to make the Irish harp to sound in the orchestra of the nations". The traditional values implicit in the conclusion of this opening editorial may be bound up with the long-standing interest in mysticism that governed Russell's beliefs throughout his life. His novel *The Avatars,* published in 1933, powerfully invokes ancient gods and heroes and their abilities to weave spells and incantations (1933: 11). This mystical bent of Russell's suggests a residual conservatism which sometimes appears at odds with the rationalist, liberal tone of the policies he usually espouses in *The Irish Statesman.*

Sean O'Faolain's opening editorial (1940: 5-9) is very different in tone. Entitled "This is Your Magazine", it begins, as we have noted above, by asserting that "*The Bell* has, in the usual sense of the word, no policy" but, later in the same paragraph, he claims that "by the time you have read three issues you will take its character for granted". The name, *The Bell,* is chosen because it has "a minimum of associations"; he has discarded "all the old symbolic words" which are "as dead as Brian Boru". These old names, he says, "belonged to the world where we growled in defeat and dreamed of the future. That future has arrived and, with its arrival killed them. All of our symbols have to be invented afresh." He goes on to say that "this Ireland is young and earnest" and that "we are living experimentally". An invitation is issued to "unpublished men of talent". He expresses his preference for "the positive to the negative, the creative to the destructive" and ends with the renewed claim that "we are absolutely inclusive".

Russell's instinctive support for the new Ireland and his attempt to exert a benign influence on the future of the Free State (still in 1923 scarcely established in the aftermath of colonisation, revolution and civil war) contrasts sharply with Sean O'Faolain's perception of the "thin society" which that State has, in practice, established (1949: 373). Æ's valedictory editorial in April 1930 regrets the weakness of the Irish audience, leading to the periodical's closure, and attributes this to defects in the Irish education system. He believes, however, that his periodical has helped to reassure Southern Unionists about their place in the new nation and expresses his optimistic belief that *The Irish Statesman* has improved the political education of its readers: "we have passed away from our passionate selves and we are coming slowly to our intellectual selves" (1930: 104). The tone is elegiac, regretful but ultimately hopeful. Contrast this lenitive writing with the more pessimistic note struck in Sean O'Faolain's editorial, "Signing Off", in April 1946, which records his growing weariness with:

> abusing our bourgeoisie, Little Irelanders, chauvinists, stuffed-shirts, pietists, Tartuffes, Anglophobes, Celtophiles.... What I am mainly left with is a certain amount of regret that we were born into this thorny time when our task has been less that of cultivating our garden than of clearing away the brambles. (April 1946: 1)

O'Faolain goes on to celebrate the factual and realist nature of the writing in *The Bell* and to warn about the dangers of "a parochial Ireland". These contrasts in the self-evaluation of the two journals illustrate the miscellany form's ability to develop new terms of debate about current issues in changing historical situations. What we are glimpsing here is a historical process where a post-revolutionary rhetoric based on tradition, hope and expectation is being supplanted by an alternative approach, asserting modernisation, opposition and challenge.

V. THE MISCELLANY GENRE

A brief exploration of the historical evolution of the miscellany will help us to set the transitions between *The Irish Statesman* and *The Bell* against the background of their influential predecessors in the genre. The miscellany periodical originated in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was quickly imported, subject to some subtle adaptations, into Ireland. Early English examples include the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which in 1731 first mischievously circumvented the rules of Parliamentary Privilege by disguising its reports of proceedings as "Debates in the Senate of Lilliput". Nineteenth-century examples in England include the *Athenaeum* and the *Cornhill,* aimed at the increasingly influential middle classes. Early Irish miscellanies include *The Hibernian Magazine: or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge,* which provided Dublin in 1771 with a characteristic mix of gossip, documentary and creative writing. Between 1807 and 1815, the *Irish Magazine and Monthly Asylum for Neglected Biography,* also known as *Watty Cox's Magazine,* specialised, according to Kevin Whelan, in "raking over the embers of 1798 in abusive, even scurrilous detail" and was distinguished by its adversarial writing, robust sense of humour and demotic style (1996: 164). Some of the characteristics and adaptations of the miscellany become evident even in this briefest of accounts: what starts as gossip and entertainment, distinguishing the miscellany from the solemn review genre, yields to the inclusion of more serious (and sometimes illicit) elements, which, in the context of a colonised country, include the covert distribution of information, instruction and subversion to a wider, less elite audience.

The miscellany disappeared from Ireland during the later nineteenth century, possibly as a result of the pervasive censorship and the absence of non-sectarian debate, but the form re-emerged powerfully in the early part of the twentieth century, with Standish James O'Grady's *The All Ireland Review* (1900-6) followed in 1904-5 by *Dana: A Magazine of Independent Thought,* edited anonymously (but probably by John Eglinton and Frederick Ryan). The *Irish Statesman* appears, as we have seen, in 1923 and *Ireland Today* follows in its wake in 1936. In the two years before its suppression in 1938, *Ireland Today* assembled together critics of the cultural poverty of the new nation's post-revolutionary society and advocated an international perspective, including support for the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War (Furze, 1974: 21). This summary of the history of the Irish miscellany genre demonstrates a number of common characteristics which were undoubtedly reflected in the production of *The Irish Statesman* and *The Bell.* It also supplies a common generic context within which we can be more sure of our judgements about the processes of change which took place between 1923 and 1940.

I believe that in the Irish miscellany genre a model was established which influenced both

Russell and O'Faolain. Common characteristics of the genre, which appear in all the examples I have cited, include, as we have already seen, the mixing of factual and creative writing, together with a sharp focus on internal Irish affairs, matched against a lively interest in the world outside Ireland. In the miscellany periodical texts can be strategically arranged by editors, providing explicit or (more usually) implicit comments on one another. For example, in the issue of *The Bell* in January 1942 O'Faolain produces an effect of this kind. An editorial complaining about the weak public response to the memorial fund for the poet, F. R. Higgins, is immediately followed by two newly commissioned poems by Irish poets, implying the strength of the poetic tradition despite the poverty of the nation's response to it. An account of a neglected Irish poet, Thomas Irwin, is immediately preceded by an article on the damage done by the literary censorship. The effect of these strategic juxtapositions is to bring together suggestions of official neglect with assertions of the vitality of the literary tradition that the magazine perceives to be under siege (O'Faolain, 1942: *passim*).

Other characteristics of the miscellany include the recruitment of industrial and commercial support and the strong dominance of editorial presence (even where the editorship is ostensibly collective or anonymous). Questions about the practicalities of editing process are frequently overlooked but I believe that the similarities in editorial practice between the two magazines are quite striking. I have expanded further on the marginalisation of the study of editorial practice in a separate essay on the topic (Ballin, 2001). We know, for instance, that O'Faolain was notoriously interventionist and that he personally contributed more articles to the magazine than anyone else (Holzapfel, 1970). Russell had at least four pen-names under which he wrote for *The Irish Statesman,* in addition to the well-known "Æ" (Davis, 1977: 124). Both editors had personal reputations for versatility entirely appropriate to exponents of the miscellany form: Yeats said that Russell displayed "an impassioned versatility" (Gibbon, 1937: 62) and Julia Moynihan perceived in O'Faolain "the curse of versatility" (1976: 20). *The Irish Statesman* was financed by Horace Plunkett, aided by a group of Irish Americans, leading to the relatively large-scale advertising revenue and a highly competitive price which created envy among its Republican rivals (Allen, 2000: 8). *The Bell* had support from some prominent industrialists who welcomed O'Faolain's ideas about the desirability of a modernised Ireland and regularly gave help by placing advertisements. Cahill's the printers were also active supporters: J. J. O'Leary, their Managing Director, paid O'Faolain a thousand a year to edit his journals and supplied him with office space (Harmon, 1994: 128-129).

The magazines were also connected in other, more personal ways. Sean O'Faolain wrote his first published story, "Lilliput", for *The Irish Statesman* in 1926 and described *The Irish Statesman,* in his autobiography *Vive Moi,* as being "of an excellence never before or since equalled in Irish journalism" (1965: 186). In his "One World" editorials in May 1945, writing about the future of international relations and the role of the new United Nations, O'Faolain paid tribute to the prescience of his predecessor's journalism:

> It is evident that should these vast schemes ultimately take shape Ireland will have to do some very hard and quick thinking during the coming year. It is only a few years since that prophetic Irishman A.E. used to keep on hammering away at us week after week that the island spirit was giving way to the cosmic spirit, and his words are becoming more and more imminently true. (1945c: 105)

The process of modelling between periodical genres usually appears to work, at a subliminal level, as an almost instinctive election of an appropriate literary form for a particular purpose. In the case of *The Irish Statesman* and *The Bell,* however, a more direct process of influence seems to be discernible. It is appropriate, at this point, to spend a little time considering how a periodical genre like the miscellany is formed and how it operates.

VI. THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE MISCELLANY GENRE

Tony Bennett has argued that "reading practices are, in part, organised by the system of genre expectations brought to bear on specific texts" and that such texts can be made to "hum and reverberate to the full range of meanings and effects they have furnished a site for" (1987: 72). I would now like to consider how "the system of genre expectations" is generated in the miscellany form and how it can illuminate the behaviour of the texts concerned. The miscellany belongs to the group of writings characterised by Mikhail Bakhtin as "secondary mixed genres, composed of variously transformed primary genres" (1986: 78). The concept of dialogism, as developed by Bakhtin, emphasises the interdependence of literary forms and the importance of intertextual relationships. Arguing that writing always distinguishes itself from other writing within the same universe of discourse, Bakhtin, in a key passage, relates this to polemical productions:

> Internally polemical discourse —the word with a sideways glance at someone else's hostile word— is extremely widespread in practical everyday speech as well as in literary speech, and has enormous style making significance [...]. In literary speech the significance of the hidden polemic is enormous. In every style, strictly speaking, there is an element of hidden polemic. (1984: 196)

Applying this to periodical production, much of which has polemical content, one can sense, in the self-conscious choice of a particular genre, the articulation of this process of differentiation. The thinking of Bakhtin about various serio-comic genres, such as "carnivalised literature" and Menippean satire, described as "deliberately multi-styled and hetero-voiced" and as having a "pointed interest in the topics of the day", fits with some precision a twentieth-century periodical in the miscellany form, such as *The Bell*.

Bakhtin remarks of these mixed forms that:

> The first characteristic of all genres of the serio-comical is their new relationship to reality; their subject, or what is more important —their starting point for understanding, evaluating and shaping reality is the living present— often the everyday. (1984: 196)

It is illuminating to set against this abstract conceptualisation the following words of Sean O'Faolain in his May 1941 editorial, where he articulates in a direct and concrete way his own positive attitude towards time and modernity:

> This merit of acute contemporaneity is the attraction of every live periodical. That is why people buy periodicals. As the saying goes, 'it keeps one in touch.' It comes from where the crowds jostle at the crossroads. (1941b: 8)

Here we see O'Faolain setting out the generic appeal of the miscellany. "The merit of acute contemporaneity" is what he brings to the Irish miscellany form, in a periodical dedicated to new writing, to precise documentation of existing conditions in present-day Ireland and to preparing the way for a long-delayed process of modernisation.

Indeed, here he not only fulfils Bakhtin's prescription for a particular relation to reality in "the living present" but also anticipates Raymond Williams's argument for the importance of accessing the "structure of feeling" of a culture, entailing a "felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time: a sense of the ways in which the particular activities combine together into a way of thinking and living" (1984: 63). In *The Long Revolution* Williams, like O'Faolain, "inverts the image of a crass modernity, and challenges the easy nostalgia for the apparent order of pre-democratic society" (Higgins, 1998: 147). O'Faolain's striking image of the crowds jostling at the crossroads invokes exactly the kind of creative carnivalesque which Bakhtin ascribes to the serio-comic genres. O'Faolain is making a social comment about the nature of periodicals and Bakhtin is speaking of a style of discourse. But the style of *The Bell* relates intimately to its emphasis on the everyday. It discards the Romantic mysticism which characterised the Irish literary revival, a mode of writing that preoccupied George Russell throughout his life and which also provides the prevailing tone of other contemporary Irish periodicals such as Seumas O'Sullivan's *The Dublin Magazine*. *The Bell* enshrines in its "sideways glance" at the opposition's rhetoric an element of "hidden polemic" in favour of a wholly different view of the world. This seems to me to indicate the direction in which the Irish miscellany has developed between the historical moment of *The Irish Statesman* and that of *The Bell*.

VII. AUDIENCES

The sense of immediacy which is provoked in O'Faolain's editorial practice in *The Bell* is linked to the final consideration I would like to deal with — that of a distinctive search for an alternative audience for the miscellany. John Eglinton tells how *The Irish Statesman* hails an audience described by Russell himself as being large but very reactionary, something which was difficult for Russell (whose self-image is said to be that of being "on the side of the outcast") to accept with ease (Eglinton, 1937: 83; 151). Monk Gibbon reports Æ's reservations about "vast numbers of semi-illiterates [...] whose triumph would be to place genius in service to mediocrity" (1937: 190). In an editorial of November 1923 Russell speaks of the poor reception of Yeats's Nobel Prize in Ireland and attributes the relative indifference of the Irish people to their general lack of education (1923: 326). In the same issue, writing of the Irish language, a proponent of Irish refers to "Æ's great family of readers and writers" as being an elite especially able to apply intelligence to the issue under discussion (O'Neill, 1923: 329). But, in his farewell editorial in 1930, Russell reckons that the audience for Irish writing is greater abroad than at home and, in the same final issue, he publishes a letter from "Amicus" suggesting that *The Irish Statesman* was "too literary" to survive (1930: 103; 112). Nicholas Allen suggests that *The Irish Statesman* enjoyed a circulation of some ten thousand copies for the first six issues and that it appealed to a clientele which included the wealthiest and most influential Irish citizens. He points out how the journal inherited the readership of Russell's former publication, the *Irish Homestead*, which had been incorporated into it at its inception (2000: 8-9). Essentially then the audience can be seen as traditional, middle-class and well-established. Russell's primary role in this context is that of an educator with superior insight.

This differs considerably from the audience actively sought by *The Bell,* seventeen years later. We have already noted the ambition to be inclusive reflected in O'Faolain's early editorials. The circulation was far smaller than that for *The Irish Statesman,* probably not exceeding three and a half thousand copies of most issues although O'Faolain, in a self-conscious act of intertextual affiliation, echoed the belief of Thomas Davis, in relation to *The Nation,* that each copy had a multiple readership of about ten people (1944: 95). The net was, however, set far wider in social terms and the successful interpellation of this wider audience of "small town intellectuals" was seen by Vivian Mercier as the journal's greatest feat (1945: 159). This particular constituency is more closely identified by Conor Cruise O'Brien (writing in *The Bell* as Donat O'Donnell) as "the teachers, the civil servants, the librarians, the lettered section of the Irish petty bourgeoisie" (1946: 1030). This is a social grouping which may be relatively powerless in conventional political terms but which, nevertheless, is identified by Pierre Bourdieu as especially open to the processes of social and cultural change (1986: 319-370). This audience was to come to play in Ireland a role not unlike that ascribed by Antonio Gramsci to the rural intellectuals of Italy: the priests, the notaries and doctors whose activities were seen by him as crucial to any development of opinion among the mass of the population (Gramsci, 1971: 14).

A contemporary witness recalls the dissident, teasing tone of the magazine, bought by him clandestinely in Ennis in 1940 and privately circulated to his friends:

> A pervasive and enviable daring was acknowledged, as was the common touch evident in what one unrecognised genius described as "the editor's orchestration of a score no other conductor would touch". (Foley, 1976: 57)

This sense of provocation is an integral part of *The Bell*'s appeal to an audience that, by and large, it actually *created.* Audience relations with this special group are strongly reinforced by such unusual measures as interrogating the readership by questionnaire, soliciting readers' letters and canvassing readers in search of original contributions by new writers. And the sense of daring gains added piquancy from the awareness of both formal and informal censorships. Indeed, Terence Brown sees the position of *The Bell* in respect of censorship as defining the ideological struggle in Ireland in the 1940s and describes it in this context as "a vital organ of empirical, humanistic self-consciousness at a moment when the new state was entering on a period of profound challenge" (1981: 203). Seamus Deane says of the group of writers associated with *The Bell* that "the exit from the labyrinth of Irishness, the old essentialism, lay in modernisation, the creation of a possible future rather than the recreation of an impossible past" (1986: 208). Both critics recognise that this miscellany has made a decisive intervention in Irish cultural history. Although, in his final, and rather despairing editorial, O'Faolain describes his role as merely a clearer of nettles from the ground of history, a more positive, less depressed and more generous reading would credit *The Bell* with a significant share in preparing the way for the public acceptance during the 1960s of the modernising policies of Sean Lemass.

We have now traced some transitions in the Irish miscellany from its original predecessors in the genre, flowing from the English models of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries up to the Irish adaptations available to, and developed creatively in turn by, George Russell and Sean O'Faolain. The fluidity of this genre is illustrated further by the sensitivity it displays to the changing political and literary situations presented to it by the impact of historical events and social change. A remarkable success of both *The Irish Statesman* and *The Bell* lies in their ability, in Bakhtin's terms, to disguise polemic, to wear ideologies lightly and to signify a challenge to contemporary conventional wisdom through the skilful way they weave between the multiplicity of miscellaneous discourses they encompass. The dissidence inherent in the genre stems not only from overt propaganda or obvious educational intent but also from a provocative use of the interplay between editorial comment, audience interaction, creative writing and factual reporting. The nature of a miscellany is to be various: concealed within that carnivalesque variety of intertwined texts lies a dangerous and delightful potential for creative mischief.

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Born into the Troubles: Deirdre Madden's *Hidden Symptoms*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine Deirdre Madden's *Hidden Symptoms* (1986) analysing how, in a city affected by the Northern Irish strife, attitudes towards the conflict seem mostly motivated by the personal connection of the characters with it. Thus, although the main protagonists have all been born into the Troubles and are suffering the effects of them, they have —if any— distinct political positions and religious tendencies and they cope with the situation in different ways. Throughout this article I will explore, along with other aspects, the insecurity in people's lives, violence, and religion as oppressive forces.

KEYWORDS: Deirdre Madden, *Hidden Symptoms*, the Troubles, Northern Irish literature

> *But what can we do? Inexorable time: often it was too late to do anything.* (Madden, 1986: 19)

Contemporary Northern Irish society is unquestionably divided among clashing and differing traditions that, for decades, have generated a violent conflict. Since its outbreak, in the late sixties,[1] several cultural areas —such as literature, cinema, music, dance or painting— have

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[1] Specifically, in 1969, when the British Army was sent to Northern Ireland to make peace between the opposing communities —Protestants and Catholics— at a moment of sectarian turmoil. However, it is worth pointing out that the conflict in Northern Ireland existed before that time and that its oldest roots are in the Plantations of Ulster that took place in the seventeenth century.

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reflected the situation, and, in so doing, have shown the significant role that politics, religion and education, among others, play in the region. In the present literary scene, a great success has been achieved with a new production that, coining the euphemistic term used to refer to the situation itself, has been called "the Literature of the Troubles", and it has been applied to drama, fiction and poetry. In this vein, poets such as Seamus Heaney, Derek Mahon or Paul Muldoon, novelists such as Robert McLiam Wilson, Deirdre Madden or Bernard Mac Laverty and, among the dramatists, Brian Friel, Martin Lynch or Anne Devlin, are some of the authors that have produced works about the situation.[2] Among the topics explored by this literature, which has developed from a realist to a more satiric and challenging mode, we find violence, exile, fear, sectarianism and bigotry. With this in mind, in this article I will focus on Deirdre Madden, who is one of these significant voices in contemporary Northern Irish writing.

Madden is a Belfast-born writer who studied at Trinity College Dublin and the University of East Anglia. To date, she is the author of six novels — *Hidden Symptoms* (1986), *The Birds of the Innocent Wood* (1988), *Light and Stone* (1992), *Nothing is Black* (1994), *One by One in the Darkness* (1996) and *Authenticity* (2002). These have made her an established novelist in the Irish literary world. Madden's narratives explore, along with other topics, women's deepest sorrows and pains, caused by the loss of people, and their emotional and spiritual struggles to cope with them. They also deal with the daily upsurge of violence —as they are conceived at the time of the Northern Irish strife— and with how such violence irredeemably permeates and conditions the lives of the people living in the region. Cultural identity is another important theme in Madden's work, in which characters have to find their distinctiveness inside a world that is broken up among fixed identities. Taking all this into account, the aim of my study is to examine Madden's first novel, *Hidden Symptoms*, a work that obtained the 1987 Rooney Prize for Irish Literature.[3] The topic of this discussion will be the analysis of the Troubles, with a special emphasis on the effect they have caused the two main characters and the strategies developed by them.[4] If we consider the way that the literature of the Troubles has been classified, this novel would be included in the group of narratives that centre on the consequences the conflict has had on the individual —in the same vein as, for instance, Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark*— or, following Corcoran's categorization, in the group of realist prose, with Jennifer Johnston's or Bernard Mac Laverty's works (1997: 154).[5]

Contrary to what happens in other contemporary novels that reflect the strife —such as the realist *Cal* (by Bernard Mac Laverty) or the satirical *Eureka Street* (by Robert McLiam

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[2] For a detailed study of the substantial body of literature produced see, among others, Kirkland (1996), Corcoran (1997), Ormsby (1992) or Pelaschiar's studies (1998).

[3] Over the years, Madden has won several literary awards, including the Hennessey Literary Award, in 1980; the Somerset Maughan Award, in 1989; and the Kerry Ingredients Book of the Year Award, in 1997.

[4] Although there are three main characters, the focus of attention will only be placed on two of them.

[5] For further references on the categorization of the Northern Irish prose, see Smyth (1997), Morales (2000), Patten (1995) and McMinn (1980).

Wilson) —*Hidden Symptoms* neither seems to focus on history nor does it attempt to offer any explanation of why violence pervades Northern Irish society. This is the opinion maintained by Patricia Craig when she criticises Madden's work, alluding to its lack of political motivation. In Craig's words, her narrative "purports to treat the sectarian conflict in the North of Ireland, while cutting out history, politics, atavistic allegiances (aside from one outcry against Orange marches)" (1996: 26). Similarly, Smyth points out that the attention is on individual insight, while the characters "engage with the 'Troubles' only to emerge with perspectives that are essentially apolitical or ahistorical" (1997: 119). My argument is that, although I agree with the previous statements, I do so only partially because the Troubles appear in the novel. Although they might be presented in an oblique way, there are examples of political loyalties in the narrative.

Hidden Symptoms is set in Belfast, some time after the eruption of the conflict, and narrates the story of three young characters —Theresa, Robert and Kathy— who have grown up in the middle of the turmoil and are engaging with the situation in different ways. Their attitudes are deeply motivated by the level of victimization they have suffered as a result of the strife. Although their behaviour might appear different, they have all experienced the traumatic results of the troubled times and, in the end, their position seems to be comparable. Characters in the novel exemplify some of the possible positions that have been adopted by people in Northern Ireland during the last three decades. Together with the main protagonists, some of the minor characters also provide good examples of people's ways of dealing with the situation and their stances towards it. Moreover, the city is another victim of the conflict and it suffers, as the characters do, the consequences of the terrible situation.

Theresa Cassidy, fatherless and brotherless, is a Queen's University student who lives with her mother in West Belfast, a Catholic area.[6] Her father "died before she was old enough to remember him" (1986: 68),[7] and now the photographs of him fill the space of the parental figure she is lacking. The main issue of the novel, which is slowly unveiled, is the recent loss of her brother.[8] This is much more complex, since it has affected her deeply inside, and it is essential for the reader's understanding of her present painful and insecure situation. Francis, her twin brother, was kidnapped and tortured and killed. The murder, as the newspaper reported, was depicted as "brutal" and "purely sectarian" (1986: 132); a view shared by Theresa who opines "they just killed Francis because of his religion" (1986: 42). Thus, coming from a Catholic upbringing is the only reason she finds to explain the murder, but she cannot understand it and has difficulties coping with its terrible cost. The awful consequences of this event in her life —continuous distress, pain and confusion— appear to be at the very core of the novel, and are essential to understanding her attitude towards the Troubles.

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[6] Belfast district distribution marks identity. Thus, West Belfast has been traditionally linked with the Catholic community and East Belfast with the Protestant. In the novel there are references to the Falls —West Belfast and Catholic— and to Protestant Sandy Road which is in South Belfast. In this respect, it is very important to point out that the place where one is in Northern Ireland —say a Catholic or Protestant, a nationalist or unionist area— most of the times conditions people's future level of commitment with the situation, and the faction you are for and associated with. Class also occupies a very important role when trying to understand people's attitudes. Segregation is more persistent among the working class, and it is here that involvement in violence is found more frequently and that both republican and loyalist organizations tend to have their roots.

[7] The edition I am using is *Hidden Symptoms* (1986, Boston-New York: The Atlantic Monthly). Further references are to the same edition and will be included between brackets.

[8] Theresa's cause for her grief is not revealed at the beginning. In fact, the reader has to make sense of it through her fragmented memories.

Theresa's bereavement and anger are exposed throughout the novel, mainly when she is with Robert, a character who witnesses her pain but is unaware of the tragic event. As a victim of the conflict, she believes that in a society like Northern Ireland, which is strongly divided, it is difficult for people to remain aloof and to be impartial. Individuals have been brought up and educated within the divide —whether religious, political, or both— and it is hard not to be involved in it. She affirms that, as far as she is concerned, people might or might not believe in God, but they always have their own loyalties. Hence, it does not seem to be a question of religion, a question of faith, but of tribal affiliations. She firmly exposes her belief to Robert when she says to him the following: "Just tell me this: if you were found in the morning with a bullet in your head, what do you think the papers would call you? An agnostic? No, Robert, nobody, not even you, is naïve enough to think that. Of course you don't believe: but there's a big difference between faith and tribal loyalty, and if you think that you can escape tribal loyalty in Belfast today you're betraying your people and fooling yourself." (1986: 46) Theresa considers that it is not possible to understand and support both sides of the conflict and feels strongly that people have their own political inclinations and culture with which they identify. However, she also acknowledges the complexity of the circumstances and thus declares: "Nobody understands. Some people say that they can see both sides, but they can't. You can only ever see one side, the side you happen to be on." (1986: 106) Considering Theresa's real situation, White comments that Madden is attempting to show that the fact of being brought up a Catholic "does not lead people toward clarity [...] but instead assures their terminal alienation" (1993: 452).

Her position is obscured and interlaced with the religious background she comes from. She has been brought up a Catholic, a fact that causes her significant problems when she tries to cope with the loss of her brother. As a believer, she has to forgive those who killed him and continue to trust the God who has allowed that horrible event to happen. Although religion should provide her with the calm she needs in order to cope with the terrible loss, she realises it does not. In this vein, she has an argument with Robert who, despite his lack of faith, considers religion ought to offer comfort in people's lives in order to make their afflictions more tolerable. Theresa, whose experience has shown her the opposite, asserts her stance with the subsequent statement: "Comfort? Why do you miserable atheists always say that about your religion? You don't know what it's like to suffer and believe. [...] I loved Francis as dearly as I loved my own life, but he was taken from me and tortured and killed. I have to go on living without him, and I have to go on believing in God, a good God, a God who loves and cares for me." (1986: 137-38) Although she believes in God and proclaims herself a Catholic, it is undeniable that she has doubts about Him —and even questions His existence—, which leads to the distress that makes her life tragic and unbearable. As the novel shows, she is constantly exposed to a permanent psychological and spiritual suffering that both surpasses emotions and is intermeshed with moral and religious matters.

Apart from religion, the protagonist makes use of another tool which heightens the complexity of her situation and the difficulties she encounters in coming to terms with the consequences of the loss of Francis. I am referring to the imagination, which is invoked by Theresa in order to create a picture of the time when her father was still alive and the Troubles had not yet begun, and which in this way enables her to overcome her current inner struggle. As the novel shows, her suffering was terrible and "it was impossible for her to continue living without him [Francis] [...] she needed him as she needed the air", so she was "at the mercy of her own memory and imagination" (1986: 33). However, this strategy does not fulfil her aspirations and the pain remains. Thus, when she returns to her origins she realises the "little access it yields" and the "little consolidation it engenders" (Parker, 2000: 86).

Robert McConville is the other young protagonist in the narrative who, like the previous character, has been born into the Troubles. He is a writer who graduated from Queen's and lacks a father and mother as well. He is involved in a relationship with Kathy, another girl studying at the same university who is Theresa's best friend.[9] From the very beginning of the novel, his stance towards the ongoing turmoil appears to be the opposite to Theresa's. Hence, the girl's partial position is set against Robert's independence from his sectarian origins, detachment and impartiality towards the conflict. In this respect, although he has been educated in a Catholic family —the same as Theresa—, he now rejects this religious upbringing.[10] It seems that all started at the moment when he grew up and "he found it increasingly difficult to live with his mother. He did not understand her. He did not understand the strange, intense religion which dominated her life. [...] By the time he left school he did not believe in God, nor did he want to." (1986: 38)[11] His progressive indifference towards Catholicism is rooted in his failure to understand religion and he thereby exposes his atheism (1986: 46) and feels there is "a thick wall of glass" between himself and Theresa (1986: 129).[12] But it is not only that he proclaims to be an atheist; he also despises his working-class background.[13] He dislikes the place where he was brought up —West Belfast, now inhabited by her sister Rose, her husband Tom and his nephew Tommy— and thinks, whenever he visits them, that "the very sight of [their] little red-brick terraced house always oppressed him and filled him with a powerful sense of the need to escape" (1986: 15). The remaking of his position and the attempt to introduce himself to the bourgeoisie world gradually estranges him from Rose, and from his family in general, a fact that, as pointed out above, upsets Theresa enormously.[14]

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[9] Although for the purpose of this discussion I will not focus on this character, I consider that it is worth mentioning something of her background and role in the novel. This character has climbed the social ladder and that is why she lives in a quite elegant house with her mother, Mrs O'Gorman. She also lacks a father, a fact that has produced in her an inferiority complex (23) and, in order to fill this space, she has replaced it with Theresa and Robert's friendship. Later in the novel, she learns that her father is not dead, but alive and with two small daughters in London, and that her mother has in fact been a liar all her life. Thus, this identity crisis becomes the centre of her grief and the main issue that helps the reader to understand her alienated position.

[10] Religion, as happens in Northern Irish society, is very important in the text. The novel is Catholic-oriented because both protagonists have been brought up in a Catholic background and the criticism towards Protestantism is evident throughout. However, *Hidden Symptoms* also shows the negative sides of Catholicism when characters cannot rely on it and, also, when it is associated with violence.

[11] There is a moment in the novel when there is a confrontation between Robert and his mother because she has discovered that he has got contraceptives. Furthermore, she is dissatisfied when she learns he will not marry a Catholic girl.

On the other hand, and to pursue the question of the antagonism to Theresa, he adopts an impartial attitude towards the conflict by embracing an intellectual mode of life that attempts to separate him from the everyday violence affecting Belfast. Higgins considers that "Robert's pseudo-intellectualism and his status as a writer make him an unwitting target for Theresa's suspicion of reality and its representation" (1999: 153). He is not interested in the Troubles, does not understand them and finds the Northern Irish political issue wearisome and boring (1986: 76). Robert is not a direct victim of the strife— in the sense Theresa is— and recognises he can cope with the situation as long as it does not affect him (1986: 30). He only knows about the murder at the end of the narrative,[15] and most of the confrontations with Theresa, then, should be considered in this light. He is a character who evades the conflict by adopting a position of non-committal. He does not criticise the bigotry behind the Orange parades that take place every summer as the girl does, and prefers to remain aloof. Considering this apparently differing attitude, it is not surprising that Robert describes Theresa as "a bloody, raving fanatic" (1986: 47). Apart from his lack of understanding regarding her position, he does not like his brother-in-law's continuous speeches on politics, his pro-republican tendencies or hatred of the British (1986: 75-76). Clearly, his strategy to deal with the crisis Northern Ireland is undergoing is that of evasion and escape, but the reader cannot deny that he is a victim, despite his efforts to stand apart.

The Troubles in Northern Ireland should not be reduced either to religious terms —Protestants and Catholics— or to politics —unionists and nationalists—, since it would mean simplifying a very much more complex conflict in which other different factors are subsumed. In my opinion, the novel tries to show the inextricability of both religion and politics, at the same time as it very subtly pinpoints other factors that have played an important role in the Northern Irish situation. A very good example appears in the reference Theresa makes to the Stormont

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[12] However, there are times in the novel when his forthright lack of belief is questionable. See for instance the moment at his niece's baptism (1986: 126-27).

[13] Theresa has also been educated in a working-class area and cannot understand or justify Robert's denial of his background.

[14] When Theresa visits the house of Robert's sister, she does not feel alienated as Robert does.

[15] As Higgins sustains (1999: 158), the revelation of this murder is as disruptive as violence itself.

Government, the Government in place from the partition of Ireland, in 1921, to its derogation, in 1972. During these years, Unionists and Protestants essentially ruled Stormont and did not allow the minority of the population —the Catholics— to stand for Government posts.[16] The novel shows this discrimination when Theresa unleashes her anger in the following allegation: "You must have really enjoyed life under the Stormont Government. Do you feel that people hate you because you're a Catholic? Well, you ought to, because they do. [...] They don't care how many of us are killed, because we breed fast, and so the numbers go up again." (1986: 47)

Similarly, the hatred of the nationalist community towards the Orange parades that take place every twelfth of July —to commemorate William III of Orange's victory over the Catholic James II— shows this connection between politics and religion.[17] In the text, Orangeism is associated with power and with anti-Catholicism and bigotry, clearly an attempt to reflect the atmosphere in Northern Ireland, particularly during the summer. Parker, pursuing this idea, thinks that "[i]t is not accident that most of the major scenes take place in July, the month in which the marching season and civil disturbances are at their height" (2000: 94). Once more, there is disagreement, regarding this event, between Robert and Theresa. Whereas for Robert the processions are "a bit of folk culture" (1986: 45) and "harmless" (46), for the female protagonist the Orange Order is "first and foremost, an anti-Catholic organization" (1986: 46). Finally, another instance of affiliation is revealed through the attitudes towards the news, a medium that indubitably serves as a direct representation of the turmoil, where, by observing people's reactions, we can perceive their political inclinations. The reader can notice this in Theresa and Tom's response to the same news: the funeral of a RUC reservist. While Theresa wishes to change to another channel "before the screen could show the flowers, the hearse, the coffin, the widow" (1986: 14), Tom reacts by saying: "Good sauce for the bastard" (1986: 16), showing happiness and satisfaction with the event. Both attitudes, together with others previously mentioned, are essential to prove the existence of loyalties in the text.

Characters live within the insecurity and fear of a troubled city, at a time when sectarian violence takes place daily and people are ignorant of their future design. It is also worth pointing out that Belfast is described in the novel as "self-destructive" (1986: 81), "dull and tedious" (1986: 101) and even claustrophobic (1986: 77). In this vein, Theresa acknowledges that her justified fear "was not an illogical fear, for Francis had been killed and Belfast was small: it might well happen again" (1986: 50). Every person can be a murderer in the city and each individual the following random victim. On the other hand, Robert, even if he wants to remain impartial and detached from the situation, is afraid "that his own innocent body might be destroyed violently and quickly" (1986: 31). This quote clearly demonstrates the impossibility of escaping from the threats of the situation, even if people want to remain detached.

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[16] It is well known that Catholics endured discrimination during the Stormont Government. The disadvantages were perceived in several areas, which included housing, the random division of electoral boundaries —known as gerrymandering— or the distribution of public and private employment, along with others. For additional information on discrimination at that time see Whyte's article "How Much Discrimination Was There Under the Unionist Regime 1921-1968?" (1983).

[17] For a detailed study on the tradition of the Orange parades and the nature of these political rituals see Bryan (2000).

Throughout the analysis of these two major characters, and following White's argument, we can appreciate that Belfast is "populated by people with very clear, unmovable ideas about the state of the world around them" (1993: 452). However, whether they show their anger and dislocate their irritation primarily with their words or pretend to be impartial and bored with the whole situation, it seems obvious that they are both examples of paralysed individuals in the middle of a society full of hatred and bigotry. They might theoretically defend their view but, in practice, they are not really committed to it; indeed, they "fail to remain consistent to the views they voice" (Parker, 2000: 94). For instance, despite Robert's aversion to Tom's republicanism, he by no means faces Tom's pro-paramilitary loyalty[18] or condemns his nephew's sectarian jokes. Robert is used to living with and seeing the violence and evil, and accepts them both. Similarly, as far as Theresa is concerned, although she attends Mass regularly, we never appreciate her tribal loyalty in any way (Parker, 2000: 94), except verbally, in the anger she expresses. Theresa "did nothing, for she did not know what she could do that would be of help; there was nothing possible but to sit and feel this pain of her loss and loneliness wander through her soul" (1986: 49).[19] In general, the impasse of violence has created a city with citizens that are passive and paralysed with fear, insecurity and confusion, and the reader is left without a final solution.

To conclude, Madden has reflected in her novel a bleak view of life in Northern Ireland through the creation of characters that are certainly suffering the dramatic consequences of the conflict. Affected at different levels, they are, as a result, coming to terms with it through distinct procedures that can be appreciated both in the dialogues they maintain with each other and in the inner thoughts the author offers to the reader. Thus, some of the characters' attitudes include anger, confusion, irritation, discontent, alienation and evasion. The path towards rationalisation and partiality —Theresa's case— or escape and impartiality —Robert's—, illustrates that the novel, as Smyth affirms, is "about knowledge and perception rather than action" (1986: 18). Madden, therefore, has focused her attention on the individual effect, rather than searching for reasons that elucidate the situation. In so doing, she has attempted to demonstrate that although responses to and consequences of the violence might vary, people, at the end, are paralysed in the claustrophobia of a city like Belfast, bombed and filled with terror and fear. Moreover, she has exemplified that in this society, religious, personal and political issues intermingle and complicate people's designs, and that loyalties are essential and inescapable. Madden does not offer any solution to the insecurity and hollowness of the city and to the individual painful conditions —since violence continues and religion confuses more than clarifies—, a fact that unavoidably informs the ambiguous tone that pervades the novel. The private clashes with the public, and the future of the people and of the region is uncertain for all. Finally, the hidden symptoms the title refers to, the character's personal condition and the hatred towards the other community, persist in being the foremost factor of the Northern Irish people's suffering and of the city's misery.[20]

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[18] Examples of this attitude are clear in some passages. For instance see pages 16, 75 and 76.

[19] Even other minor characters that clearly show their loyalty, mainly Tom, only confirm it through words. We do not see them acting, they are also paralysed and passive.

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[20] The research carried out for the writing of this paper has been financed by an FPI scholarship and by the "Vicerrectorado de Investigación" —research project UAH2002/051—, both of the University of Alcalá. I would like to thank Marisol Morales Ladrón (University of Alcalá) for having read an early draft of this paper and having offered valuable advice.

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Reading in the Dark: the Transcendence of Political Reality through Art

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ABSTRACT

In the last three decades scholars coming from the most different fields have defended the positive, regenerating and creative qualities of the comic mode. Laughter is an agent of transcendence, a vehicle for coping with the hardships of life, a valuable talisman which allows us to survive in a world hedged with the threat of every horror and every ignominy. *Reading in the Dark*, by Seamus Deane, is a very clear example of a novel in which humour helps to mitigate the harshness of the difficult and painful situations that are described, so that at the end of the book the spirit of life triumphs over death and sadness. By exploiting the narrator's naivety Deane plays down false sentimentalism and melodrama and prevents the reader from falling into despair.

KEYWORDS: humour; comedy; tragedy; Ireland; narrator; comic hero; transcendence; jester; freedom.

Theorists, from Aristotle on, have classified tragedy with the sublime and beautiful and comedy with the ludicrous and ugly and have argued that of the two, tragedy is assuredly the nobler, wiser and profounder. Nevertheless, in the last three decades this supremacy of the tragic mode has been strongly questioned by scholars coming from the most different fields —historians, philosophers, literary critics, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, doctors— who have rejected the characterization of comedy as hostile, scornful, aggressive and derisive and have defended its positive, regenerating and creative qualities. Laughter liberates man from everything

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that oppresses and terrifies him: the sacred, death, supernatural awe, divine and human power, etc. Laughter defeats fear and offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world and realize the relative nature of things. Laughter represents the victory of the future over the past, of the new over the old. Humour is vital in life since it functions as a corrective and complement to seriousness:

> True ambivalent and universal laughter does not deny seriousness but purifies and completes it. Laughter purifies from dogmatism, from the intolerant and the petrified; it liberates from fanaticism, and pedantry, from fear and intimidation, from didacticism, naïveté and illusion, from the single meaning, the single level, from sentimentality. Laughter does not permit seriousness to atrophy and to be torn away from the one being, forever incomplete. It restores this ambivalent wholeness. (Bakhtin, 1984: 122-3)

For Bakhtin, as for many other theorists, reality is essentially contradictory and confusing and only comedy can deal with the incongruities of life. For the comic spirit people and circumstances are not neatly divisible into black and white, light and dark, right and wrong. Comedy appreciates the ambiguities of truth and goodness and therefore mixes and confounds all rigid categories and fixed identities. Henry James has given us a beautiful portrait of this "terribly mixed little world":

> No themes are so human as those that reflect for us, out of the confusion of life, the close connexion of bliss and bale, of the things that help with the things that hurt, so dangling before us for ever that bright hard medal, of so strange an alloy, one face of which is somebody's right and ease and the other somebody's pain and wrong. (Cit. in Craig, 1989: 63)

Because of its acceptance of the incongruities and tensions of life, comedy leaves us with a growing sense of freedom and a distinct sense of faith renewed and hope rekindled. A stubborn affirmation of life is implicit in the comic vision as well as a firm refusal to be destroyed. Humour is valuable in giving us distance and perspective in painful situations and thus allows us to face and transcend those moments of anguish: "It endows human nature with the means to turn the corner, perpetually, on the disasters sown in its path by its own freedom from instinctual programmation" (Gutwirth, 1993: 190). Having a sense of humour involves a flexibility and openness to experience which a fundamentally serious person lacks and, therefore, a person with a sense of humour will always preserve a measure of his freedom —if not of movement, at least of thought. He/she will reject the notion of an absolute and indisputable truth and welcome the relativity of prevailing doctrines, beliefs or ideas. Humour does not blind us to the reality of suffering and failure in life "and yet ... we can always step back a bit to enjoy the incongruity" (Morreall, 1983: 128). Thus, laughter is an agent of transcendence, a vehicle for coping with the hardships of life, a valuable talisman which allows us to survive in a world hedged with the threat of every horror and every ignominy. As a matter of fact, the Swiss dramatist Friedrich Dürrenmatt, the writer William Gerhardie and the critic Wylie Sypher, amongst others, have argued that comedy can understand and reflect better than any other genre the absurdity and hopelessness of the modern world. Whereas Dürrenmatt says that comedy alone is suitable for a society that is terrified by the atom bomb, Gerhardie goes even further when he states that humour is "the most serious quality in literature" (cit. en Craig, 1989: 100), since it is capable of recognizing and accepting the concatenate and chaotic nature of modern experience. Sypher has expressed himself in similar terms when he explains that the devastating reality of the twentieth century with its world wars, concentration camps and big lies has forced human beings to become aware of the absurdity of life and face the chaos and nonsense of the world. And admitting the irrational and contradictory in our lives implies recognizing that the comic is part of our existence: "For all our science, we have been living through an age of Un-reason, and have learned to submit to the Improbable, if not to the Absurd. And comedy is, in Gautier's words, a logic of the absurd". (197) In an age of disorder, irrationalism and fragmentary lives comedy can represent the human plight better than tragedy: "For tragedy needs the 'noble', and nowadays we seldom can assign any usable meaning to 'nobility'. The comic now is more relevant, or at least more accessible, than the tragic." (201)

Reading in the Dark, by Seamus Deane, is a very clear example of a novel in which humour helps to mitigate the harshness of the difficult and painful situations that are described, so that at the end of the book the spirit of life triumphs over death and sadness. But in order to understand the mastery with which Deane fuses comic and serious narrative to avoid falling into false sentimentalism and help the reader transcend grief, it is necessary to describe first the plot of the novel. This will also allow us to appreciate Deane's brilliant and poetic manipulation of language. *Reading in the Dark* is the story of a Catholic family in Northern Ireland whose existence has been destroyed by politics. The novel covers a period that goes from 1945 to 1971 and is told by one of the children who remembers his childhood and adolescence and how throughout these years he tried to reconstruct bit by bit the past of his family, a past that has obviously marked the present, leaving behind it a trail of pain, disappointment and desperation. The narrator gradually discovers that those dearest to him have been trapped in a series of lies which produce deep suffering and a series of truths that cannot be told because they would intensify the anguish. The narrator, a sensitive, shrewd and clever boy, realizes very soon that his father torments himself with the disappearance of his brother Eddie in a big shoot-out between the IRA and the police in 1922. As a matter of fact, when his mother tells him that Eddie is just part of the past, the narrator does not believe her, because he is aware of the fact that the pain that surrounds his family and pierces their heart is closely related to Eddie's death:

> But it wasn't the past and she knew it.
>
> So broken was my father's family that it felt to me like a catastrophe you could live with only if you kept it quiet, let it die down of its own accord like a dangerous fire. Silence everywhere. My father knowing something about Eddie, not saying it, not talking but sometimes nearly talking, signalling. I felt we lived in an empty space with a long cry from him ramifying through it. At other times, it appeared to be as cunning and articulate as a labyrinth, closely designed, with someone sobbing at the heart of it. (42-43)

The narrator knows that his father will tell him one day the terrible secret that has marked and destroyed his family and, although he is eager for this moment to come, sometimes he would prefer his father to seal his lips, because he knows that the truth will bring him more suffering than happiness:

> I knew then he was going to tell me something terrible some day, and, in sudden fright, didn't want him to; keep your secrets, I said to him inside my closed mouth, keep your secrets, and I won't mind. But, at the same time, I wanted to know everything. That way I could love him more; but I'd love myself less for making him tell me, for asking him to give me a secret. (46)

And at last the day arrives in which his father decides to tell him what he thinks is the truth, but in fact is a great lie, as the narrator well knows, since he has heard the real story from his grandfather. His father, overwhelmed by sorrow and shame, tells his two eldest sons during a visit to a little church that Eddie did not die in the shoot-out, but was killed by his own people because he was an informer. The child knows that his father's life has been destroyed by a false rumour and suffers because he can see his father's pain. He would like to tell his father the real facts, but that would ruin him completely. Deane, a great manipulator of language, offers us a beautiful image of the boy's feelings towards his father in those critical moments: "But I couldn't afford to love him any more than this, otherwise my face would start to break up into little patches and I would have to hold it together with the strap of my helmet." (135)

As the novel develops the narrator comes to the conclusion that his father must have suspected that the truth was more complex and wounding, that something lay beyond him, but that he never asked anything because he knew that if a great "lie" had destroyed the harmony of his family, the acknowledgment of the truth would close all doors on hope, leaving all those dear to him trapped in absolute darkness:

> Maybe it was wise for him, for the whole marriage had been preserved by his not allowing the poison that had been released over all these years, as from a time-release capsule, to ever get to him in a lethal dose. I would have readily died rather than say anything to him, or insinuate anything before her, about that last big mistake that so filled the small place they lived in. (229)

And what is that terrible truth that the narrator's father does not want to know? Simply and tragically, that the police had leaked the false information that Eddie was an informer in order to save the true Judas, McIlhenny, married to Katie, a sister of the narrator's mother. The narrator's mother has always known that Eddie was innocent and McIlhenny guilty, because she was the one who in 1926 warned McIlhenny, the man she had once loved, that he had better leave the country because someone had seen him get out of a police car in the small hours of the morning. This explains why McIlhenny disappeared all of a sudden in 1926, leaving his wife pregnant with a daughter, and never came back. As a matter of fact, McIlhenny's vanishing is a real mystery for everybody, including his own wife, who does not understand the decision the young man took many years ago. The narrator's mother is obsessed with this story of the past that has marked her family, especially because she is aware of the fact that her husband is tormented by a great lie which she does not dare to refute. Telling the truth would imply admitting that she helped McIlhenny escape, thus rousing not only her husband's, but everybody's rejection and fury. Taking into consideration that the most disgraceful thing that can happen to a Catholic family in Northern Ireland is to find out that one of its members works for the police, more shameful would be the discovery that a Catholic has protected an informer. The narrator's mother has been bearing for many years this heavy burden which crushes her, makes it impossible for her to breathe and forces her to see ghosts on the stairs of her house.

But the situation becomes more desperate and distressing for the mother when her father tells her that he was the one who ordered Eddie's execution. Her whole world collapses and the reader understands why she prefers her husband to suffer because of a lie, rather than revealing the truth. The narrator's mother gradually deteriorates and her grieving becomes so inconsolable that she loses all sense of reality and needs medical treatment. She whispers to herself and continually cries out "Burning. It's all burning" to refer to her own life which has burst into flames, leaving her only the ashes to collect. At night her family will be wakened by voices and will come downstairs to find her sobbing in the backyard, freezing in her nightdress. She weeps all the time and the doctor gives her pills and medicines that only intensify her pain:

> She'd take them and become calmer, but her grief just collected under the drugs like a thrombosis. When it took over, overcoming the drugs, her body shook and her eyes glimmered with tears that rarely flowed but shone there, dammed up in her tear-ducts, dangerous. She was in such pain she could not cry, only wish that she could. (141)

The whole family suffers with that inexplicable transformation, since they see how the person they love so much is going away from them. The narrator, who knows the true story because his grandfather told it to him, feels impotent and would like to find the way to free his mother from the pain of the thorns that are piercing her heart:

> I dreamt of a magic syringe that I could push up into the inside skin of her arm and withdraw, black with grief, and keep plunging it and withdrawing it, over and over, until it came out clear, and I would look up in her face and see her smiling and see her eyes full of that merriment I thought I remembered. (141-2)

But in spite of the medical treatment, the crying and sobbing increase and the family offer her all their love in order to calm down her grief: they touch her, pet her, stroke her hair, hug her, etc. Deane offers us again a beautiful and poetic image of the pain the narrator feels:

> The hairbrush lay in the corner of the kitchen where she must have thrown it. I picked it up and tugged at the strands of her hair caught in the wire bristles, winding them round my fingers, feeling them soften on my skin as though the tightness were easing off them into me. I felt it travelling inside, looking for a resting place, a nest to live in and flourish, finding it in the cat's cradle of my stomach and accumulating there. (143)

But one day she undergoes a sudden change and her voice becomes clear and young. Through the remarks his mother makes the narrator realizes that she is referring to someone she has loved in the past, although at that stage he still does not know that it is McIlhenny. But what hurts the boy is that during this period his mother talks mostly to the younger children, leaving his father, his elder brothers and him out of her little confidential bursts. Time passes and one morning the following winter the mother surprises everybody by telling them that she does not need any more pills, since she is better now, although she will never be as she was. For the first time in weeks she prepares dinner and even makes plans about Christmas. She also starts caring about her physical appearance and goes to the dentist to have her false teeth put in. But in spite of the change, the narrator is aware of the fact that behind her new smile the pain is still throbbing:

> But when I saw her smile, then and ever afterwards, I could hear her voice, creased with sorrow, saying, "Burning, burning," and I would look for the other voice, young and clear, lying in its crypt behind it. But it slept there and remained sleeping, behind her false white smile. (147)

The mother's startling illness affects the father and ages both of them. Although his physical strength is still immense the long period of crying and sobbing obviously deteriorates him.

We have seen that the truth can be more destructive than falsehood and the narrator's mother is not the only character who experiences this reality. The knowledge of the true story of the family also transforms the narrator's life into a nightmare, distancing and separating him from those he loves most: his parents. He can never look at his father or talk to him in the same way because he is betraying him by hiding the true facts, whereas his mother feels trapped and exposed by her own son. In a very original way, by writing in Irish all the information he has gathered so that his father cannot understand the text, he has made his mother know that both of them share and know what happened in the past. But the truth instead of uniting them, separates them even more: "I wished I could love her in the old way again. But I could only grieve for not being able to; and grieve the more that she could not love me like that any more either."(217) The narrator becomes aware of the fact that he is distancing himself from his mother and so when his father plays a record at home "it was then as though the music was winding out of me, a lamentation for the loss of her" (219). His mother becomes completely hostile to him and when he tries to come near her by bringing her a flower and assuring her that she has not got to worry because he will never say a word, she reacts in a totally indifferent way. The young boy does not realize that what is destroying the relationship mother/son is not the suspicion that he may at any moment tell the whole story, but the fact that his mother cannot bear her son knowing a terrible and shameful truth. It is as if the narrator with his sole presence reminded his mother all the time of the past and, therefore, she cannot forget it or convince herself that it is just the product of her imagination. As a matter of fact, when the child once asks her what she would like for her birthday, she merely answers: "… just for that one day, the seventeenth of May, to forget everything. Or at least not to be reminded of it. Can you give me that?" (224). The narrator does not know what to reply and his mother attacks him saying that if he went away she would look properly after his father for once, without the narrator's eyes always fixed on her: "I told her I would. I'd go away, after university. That would be her birthday gift, that promise. She nodded. I moved away just as she put her hand towards me." (224) Those ghosts, those shadows from the past that his mother has always believed to have seen on the stairs have now a proper identity and are not any longer the imaginary product of her anxiety and sorrow: "Now the haunting meant something new to me —now I had become the shadow". (217) Knowing that her son has gathered the truth leaves her trapped in the past, making it impossible for her to go forwards: even if she wanted to erase everything from her memory, she would not be able to, because her son would always be there reminding her of a period of her life that still hurts her. As a matter of fact, the narrator and his mother only find love and peace again when she suffers a stroke and loses the power of speech. It is as if by being trapped in her silence and not being able to use language to refer to what happened years ago that reality had disappeared. Now that she cannot speak and he has promised to seal his lips, "we could love each other, at last, I imagined" (230).

This silence not only makes the reconciliation between mother and son possible, but also brings his parents together. The mother has freed herself from the words that only produce anxiety because their mere utterance implies the admission of a hurtful reality and uses the language of strokes to close the wound opened by a past of betrayals:

> I imagined that, in her silence, in the way she stroked his hand, smiled crookedly at him, let him brush her hair, bowing her head obediently for him, she had told him and won his understanding. I could believe now, as I never had when a child, that they were lovers. (231)

The narrator's life is not only marked by the heartbreaking past of his family, but also by the political situation of Northern Ireland. As one of the characters in the novel says, a policeman, the great enemy of the Catholics: "Politics destroyed people's lives in this place" (204). It is really striking the way in which they inculcate in the children's mind from the very beginning an extreme hatred towards the British government and the Protestants, that sometimes leads to the distortion of the truth. The narrator already experiences this reality at an early age when he watches a boy killed by a reversing lorry. For months he keeps seeing the accident and the "worst" is that he does not feel pity for the child or the driver, but for the policeman who looked under the lorry and was totally distressed by what he saw: "I felt the vertigo again on hearing this and, with it, pity for the man. But this seemed wrong; everyone hated the police, told us to stay away from them, that they were a bad lot." (11) What is tragic about this situation is that, although the narrator is still very young, he already knows that he must hide his feelings, since it is inconceivable that a Catholic may have any sympathy for a policeman. Therefore, the boy feels greatly relieved when a year later a friend of his tells him that what really happened was that the child was run over by a police car that did not even stop: "As a result, I began to feel then a real sorrow for Rory's mother and for the driver who had never worked since." (12)

Although the narrator saw everything, he prefers to believe his friend's version of the story, because that way he does not feel that he is betraying his own people, which, as he has been explained nearly from the day he was born, is the worst of crimes.

The narrator learns very quickly that in Northern Ireland religious celebrations are manipulated and turned into political ones, as happens with the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, and that people are not divided into good or bad, but Catholic or Protestant. As a matter of fact, throughout the whole novel he always specifies whether the character he is referring to is Catholic or Protestant, even though she may only be the librarian of the town. The narrator really experiences the hatred and sorrow generated by the political situation in Northern Ireland one day when he is about to be hit and beaten by a gang of six and he decides to throw a stone at a police car that is passing right at that moment. The narrator knows that the car will stop and this will frighten the bullies away. But in his desire to save his skin he is not aware of the consequences that this action will have in a land marked by political fights. The narrator does not know yet that everybody believes that his uncle Eddie was an informer and that the fact that he has tried to be sheltered by the police proves that the whole family is collaborating with the police. This explains why the narrator does not understand the hostile reaction of his parents. His mother asks him if he has not got self-respect and pride and his father tells him that he should have shown more guts, sense and courage by letting the gang give him a few punches. The narrator cannot believe what he is hearing and cannot help answering: "Courage? To get battered? That's just stupidity." (102) The narrator, a child who is free of any kind of prejudices, is just applying the laws of logic, not being aware of the fact that such laws do not work in those places where everyday life has become an absurdity. Obviously, it is totally ridiculous and incongruous for the narrator's parents to prefer their child to be crucified rather than being seen with the police, but in a territory like Northern Ireland where the personal and the political always go together, any mistake can have terrible repercussions. Nobody wants to play football with him and when he watches a game and kicks the ball back from the sideline, the player will lift the ball and wipe it on the grass before going on with the game, as if the narrator were a leper. Even his own father is insulted on his account, as if the whole family were a gang of traitors. As the narrator does not any longer know what to do to defend himself from his parents' attacks, he decides to strike back and tells his father that he is not guilty of any crime and that if he wants to blame someone he should blame Eddie and not him. The father cannot repress his anger and hits him, but feels immediately sorry for what he has done, because he knows that behind his son's words lies a great truth. But the narrator, who is only a child, is incapable of forgiving his father's violent reaction and takes revenge by destroying the roses his father looks after with so much care. His father naturally punishes him and tells him that he does not want him to ask him more questions and that he had better stay out of his way, but at the same time, he realizes that his love for his son is above the political issues that destroy people's lives:

> I returned upstairs and fell across the bed, still angry, but more horrified, and half-cried, half-cursed myself to sleep. It was getting dark when I woke. Someone had touched me. I opened my eyes a slit, stared at the

> wallpaper and closed them again as my father bent over me. He kissed my hair. I slowly stiffened, from the toes up. (108)

I explained before how in a land marked by hatred and political quarrel the laws of common sense cannot be applied and this is something the narrator learns not only through the episode I have just described, but also through another event that takes place three years before. In January 1949 the narrator proudly shows his friends a long pistol a young German sailor had given to his father at the end of the First World War. This incident would be of no importance and would pass unnoticed if the political circumstances were different, but we are speaking about a country at war. The narrator explains it very clearly in a sentence not devoid of subtle irony: "But since we had cousins in gaol for being in the IRA, we were marked family and had to be careful. Young as I was, I was being stupid." (27) An informer sees what the children are doing and tells the police about it. Such an innocent action as boasting before your friends about your father's gun has overwhelming consequences. The police go to the narrator's house in order to get the gun and they destroy everything: the linoleum is ripped up, the floorboards crowbarred up, the contents of the tins poured all over the floor of the kitchen, etc. As they do not find the gun, which the narrator has buried in a field, they take the narrator, his eldest brother, and his father to the police barracks where they beat them violently in order to get the truth:

> Then they beat him on the neck and shoulders with rubber truncheons, short and gorged-red in colour. He told them, but they didn't believe him. So they beat us too, Liam and me, across the table from him. I remember the seat and the rage on his face as he looked. When they pushed my chin down on the table for a moment… (28-9)

The narrator cannot sleep at night because of the nightmares he has and every time he sees a light flickering the image of the police car reappears and he feels terrified: "The police smell took the oxygen out of the air and left me sitting there, with my chest heaving." (29)

In order to tell this family story marked by hatred and pain, Deane chooses a narrator who from the very beginning shows himself to be particularly clever and eager to learn. In contrast to other children of his age,.what he most likes about starting secondary school and has him "enchanted" is that he will be reading Latin and French. As a matter of fact, in order to prepare himself for school he tries to read a prose translation of *The Aeneid*, although he has to leave it because it is too difficult for him. This curiosity, this desire to get more and more knowledge is clearly seen in the essay he writes when he is still at primary school. Instead of writing a story about everyday life and using a simple vocabulary, he prefers to go to the dictionary and choose "… long or strange words I had found in the dictionary —'cerulean', 'azure', 'phantasm' and 'implacable'— all of them describing skies and seas I had seen only with the Ann of the novel." (21) His grandfather, whom he looks after during his illness, very soon discovers that his grandson is a brainy child or, as he says, a "smart boy" (118).

His cleverness and wit make him realize that something terrible has happened in the past in his family and that what others tell him is just part of the story and not the whole truth. In this sense, what the narrator does throughout the novel is reconstruct the events in terms of what he has heard, as if he were putting together the pieces of a big puzzle:

> My family's history was like that too. It came to me in bits, from people who rarely recognised all they had told. Some of the things I remember, I don't really remember. I've just been told about them so now I feel I remember them, and want to the more because it is so important for others to forget them. (225)

The narrator knows that many have tried to embellish the story by adding details that are possibly untrue, but he struggles with unflagging enthusiasm to reconstruct the past and not forget those events that must be remembered. For a long time he celebrates all the anniversaries —the deaths, the betrayals, etc.— and, although at the end of the novel he gives us a coherent image of the family story, he is not totally satisfied, because there are still many unsolved mysteries, many questions he should have asked his parents, but that will now remain unanswered.

The narrator of *Reading in the Dark* is characterized not only by his curiosity and intelligence, but also by his great sensibility. Throughout the novel we discover a human being capable of feeling sympathy for the pain of others and willing to soothe the sufferings of those he loves. We have already seen several examples of the narrator's sensibility, but there is a particularly beautiful one that takes place when he is just a small child. One night the family are listening to a boxing match on the radio. It is a terrible fight and one of the boxers is being pulverised by the other. The father cannot stand it any longer and starts shouting at the radio "Stop the fight" (227). The fight goes on and the poor loser is driven all round the ring. When everything is over the father says "Brave but stupid" (227), goes out to the backyard, sweeps it, and then enters the coal shed and starts breaking the great shale pieces like mad. Although the narrator cannot understand what is going on, he perceives that his father is in deep sorrow: "I knew I wasn't imagining his sorrow, but I couldn't fathom it." (227) He lies awake all night and when the next morning Brother Collins gives him a blow, because he has fallen asleep in class, he only thinks of his father: "And the blows, when they came, shook in last night's shed and were scarcely felt." (227)

The fact that the narrator is a sensitive, clever person, with an insatiable desire to learn and know more is fundamental in the novel because these qualities lead him to suspect that something terrible has happened in the past and to try to solve all the enigmas. But, although the narrator has brains and is very shrewd, he is first of all a child or an adult who is remembering his childhood and therefore has the naivety and innocence characteristic of his age. Deane uses precisely the narrator's childish comments and thoughts to introduce humour in the novel and thus soothe the wounding reality he is portraying. This is a device that has been used by many authors who, like Deane, have realized that if events are told by a clever and observant child who because of his age is ignorant of the world at large, the way is paved for humour without destroying the essential meaning of the story or making it grotesque.[1]

So, in *Reading in the Dark* the moments of tragedy and sadness are redeemed by the innocent reasoning of the narrator who thus brightens a sombre context. We have a clear example of this at the beginning of the book when the mother, tortured by the past, tells her son to be careful because there is a shadow on the stairs. The situation itself is painful: a woman who has lost all sense of reality and is trapped in desperation and pain because of certain events that happened a long time ago. Nevertheless, the reaction of the child, who is still ignorant of the world at large, appeases the sorrow and makes the reader smile: "I went down, excited, and sat at the range with its red heart fire and black lead dust. We were haunted! We had a ghost, even in the middle of the afternoon." (6) Instead of feeling terrified or depressed by the nervous state of his mother, the narrator is delighted not only by having a ghost on the stairs of his house, but also by the fact that against all rules it appears in the middle of the afternoon.

Something similar happens when his aunt Katie and his mother talk about McIlhenny who, as we said above, left the former when she was only a few months pregnant: "When she said McIlhenny's name, just that, just his surname, she made a noise hat sounded like a curse. My mother drooped her head and Katie just nodded at her, sympathetically, though it seemed to me that it was Katie who deserved the sympathy." (128) Clearly, it seems quite ridiculous that Katie has to comfort her sister for something that happened to her, but at that stage of the novel the narrator does not yet know that his mother was in love with McIlhenny, who left her to marry Katie.

One of the sections of the book that best illustrates how the mixture of the comic and the tragic liberates from melodrama and false sentimentalism is that in which we are told about the death of the narrator's younger sister, Una, who is only six years old. The whole situation is deeply painful and it affects not only the girl's parents, and especially the mother, but also the narrator who misses his sister. The chapter is titled "Feet" because the narrator hears everything hidden under a table and, therefore, can only see the elders' shoes. This helps to reduce the sadness of the events being portrayed, since the narrator recognizes people by their shoes and deduces what they are doing from the movements they make:

> They were at the bottom of the stairs. All the feet moved that way. I could see my mother's brothers were there. I recognised Uncle Manus's brown shoes: the heels were worn down and he was moving back and forward a little. Uncle Dan and Uncle Tom had identical shoes, heavy and rimmed with mud and cement, because they had come from the building site in Creggan. Dan's were dirtier, though, because Tom was the foreman. But they weren't good shoes. Dan put one knee up on a chair. There was scaffold oil on his socks. (14)

At the same time the narrator makes his own comments about what is happening and their naivety prompts the reader's smile:

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[1] Recent examples are *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* (1993), by Roddy Doyle, *Angela's Ashes* (1996), by Frank McCourt, *The Orchard on Fire* (1995), by Shena Mackay, *The Arizona Game* (1996), by Georgina Hammick, or *Human Croquet* (1997), by Kate Atkinson.

> This was a new illness. I loved the names of the others —diphtheria, scarlet fever or scarlatina, rubella, polio, influenza; they made me think of Italian football players or racing drivers or opera singers. Each had its own smell, especially diphtheria: the disinfected sheets that hung over the bedroom doors billowed out their acrid fragrances in the draughts that chilled your ankles on the stairs. The mumps, which came after the diphtheria, wasn't frightening; it couldn't be: the word was funny and everybody's face was swollen and looked as if it had been in a terrific fight. But this was a new sickness. Meningitis. It was a word you had to bite on to say it. It had a fright and a hiss in it. When I said it I could feel Una's eyes widening all the time and getting lighter as if helium were pumping into them from her brain. They would burst, I thought, unless they could find a way of getting all that pure helium pain out. (14)

She was only five, younger than me. I tried to imagine her not there. She would go to heaven, for sure. Wouldn't she miss us? What could you do in heaven, except smile? She had a great smile. (15)

A few weeks after, in the middle of the winter, the narrator's mother asks him to visit Una's grave and put flowers on it. While he is at the graveyard he thinks he sees Una coming right down the path before him, but he doubts whether to tell his mother about it or not. The conclusion he comes to is really comic: "I didn't know if I would tell or not; that depended on what I was asked. I knew it would upset my mother, but, then again, it might console her to think Una was still about, although I wished she wasn't wandering around that graveyard on her own." (18)

One of the most dramatic events of the novel takes place, as we saw above, when the narrator throws a stone at a police car in order to avoid being beaten by a gang of bullies and is rejected not only by his parents, but also by his friends. Again the narrator's childish reasoning makes the reader smile and prevent sadness and despair from pervading the whole episode. So, when the narrator realizes that he is being criticized by everybody because he has been seen in a police car he decides that the "best" thing to do is to run away to Chicago, a city he has heard his father and uncles talk about. It is really absurd and comic for a small child to think of emigrating to a town so far away, but since he does not know anything about distances he believes that Chicago is a good choice. Obviously, the narrator cannot fulfil his plan and has to face his parents, who scold him for bringing shame again to the family. The culminating point comes as we saw above, when his father gives him a blow, making him pay for what others have done in the past. The situation itself is tragic, but what is contradictory is that in such a moment of tension the only thing that seems to worry the narrator is that he will go to bed without dinner:

> "Bed," she said, "bed, right now."
> "But I've had no dinner."
> "Bed, this instant!"
> I fled upstairs. (103)

Months pass and the other children still do not want to play with him. Therefore, his eldest brother, Liam, works out a plan to clean the narrator's image: he must convince a priest to accompany him to the police station with the excuse that he wants to make an apology, whereas they will tell everybody else that it was the Bishop who sent the priest to tell Sergeant Burke off for all the lies he has told about the child. Clearly, in order to achieve his aim the narrator must first have an interview with the Bishop and persuade him to help him. The meeting with the Bishop is really comic because of the thoughts the child entertains during the visit. As soon as he enters the room: "His black coat was well-tailored and sat very well, I thought, against his purple *shirt*. Shirt? What *was* its name? I had to concentrate." (109) We then see how the narrator reflects on the adequacy of his reactions to what the priest says:

> Here I faltered. Liam had advised me to get tearful at this bit, but there was no problem. I was tearful. My sorrow for myself was overwhelming. (111)

> "Yes, Your Lordship, to talk to God."
>
> He gazed at me for a moment. Although I had tears in my eyes I wondered about that last sentence. Too corny? (111)

The narrator tries to win the Bishop's sympathy by making him believe that he is thinking of devoting himself to the religious life. The Bishop is very surprised because the boy is still too young. Therefore he answers that he will think about it and that they will meet again in a year's time: "I bowed and left. A year from now? A year? Could it go on for a year? I shut my eyes in disbelief." (112) Of course, the Bishop will take such a long time to meditate on the boy's vocation and not on the problem that is troubling him right now and, as a matter of fact, two weeks later he sends Father O'Neill, his right-hand man, to the narrator's house to accompany him to the police station. He is a priest of a very strong character and clear ideas whom we only know through the comments the narrator makes, which contributes to introducing humour and soothing the hardness of the situation:

> "It's more than good of you, Father, to take up your valuable time for a scamp like this one. I'm sure you have other and more important things to do."
>
> Mistake, Burke, I said to myself. Don't tell O'Neill what he should be doing. Sure enough, O'Neill responded.
>
> "I've plenty to do, Sergeant, as I'm sure you have yourself. And I'm not privy to all that went on. But His Lordship asked me to come here and listen to this boy's apology for reasons which he said you would well understand but which, in his wisdom, he felt no need to explain to me. So I'm sure it's a minor matter to you, but I don't have more important things to do than serving my Bishop." (114)

The episode has a happy and comic ending because when the other boys ask the narrator why he has gone to the police station with a priest, he not only tells them that O'Neill has told Burke off for all his lies about the child, but goes even further and says that the Bishop is thinking about excommunicating the policeman and that he has even written a letter to the government about Burke's bad behaviour.

The moments of humour produced by the narrator's naivety are not only introduced during the report of sad events, but are scattered throughout the novel, bringing light and hope to the story and giving us instants of relief, of transcendence, in the middle of so much suffering. So, for example, the fear the narrator has that an ancient legend might become true makes us smile because of its innocence:

> You sat there and closed your eyes and wished for what you wanted most, while you listened for the breathing of the sleeping warriors of the legendary Fianna who lay below. They were waiting there for the person who would make that one wish that would rouse them from their thousand-year sleep to make final war on the English and drive them from our shores forever. That would be a special person, maybe with fairy eyes, a green one and a brown one, I thought, or maybe a person with an intent in him, hard and secret as a gun in his pocket, moving only when he could make everything else move with him. I was terrified that I might, by accident, make that special wish and feel the ground buckle under me and see the dead faces rise, indistinct behind their definite axes and spears. (56)

Obviously, the logic of a child is very different from that of an adult because his mind is free from all kinds of prejudices and conventions. So, when he reads his first novel, *The Shan Van Vocht*, a text about the great rebellion of 1798, he demystifies with his comments the traditional image of the brave hero:

> The heroine was called Anne, and the hero was Robert. She was too good for him. When they whispered, she did all the interesting talking. He just kept on about dying and remembering her always, even when she was there in front of him with her dark hair and her deep golden-brown eyes and her olive skin. So I talked to her instead and told her how beautiful she was and how I wouldn't go out on the rebellion at all but just sit there and whisper in her ear and let her know that now was forever and not some time in the future when the shooting and the hacking would be over, when what was left of life would be spent listening to the night wind wailing on graveyards and empty hillsides. (19-20)

The interpretation the narrator makes of the text is comic and at the same time exposes the absurdity of human behaviour. The narrator does not understand why the hero is always talking about the future and death instead of enjoying the present moment; he does not comprehend that someone can choose a blind obedience to principles and a tenacious pursuit of aspirations which can only lead to sorrow and vexation. The narrator's attitude to life is fundamental in an article like this that defends the liberating and regenerating character of humour. In *The Spirituality of Comedy* Hyers, for whom "to understand comedy is to understand humanity" (1), argues that whereas the tragic hero exalts virtues such as courage, loyalty, duty, honour, pride, stubborn determination, absolute devotion, which only eventuate in destruction because of their inflexible and closed nature, the comic hero, on the other hand, celebrates and enjoys life and does not try to reduce it to a set of abstract principles. Life is a game, a feast and not work, an obligation or a series of battles that may lead us to death. The comic hero's commitment is to the basic, simple, common events of everyday life that are despised by those who have a heroic and unrealistic view of the world. With his peculiar interpretation of *The Shan Van Vocht* the narrator is defending the virtues the comic hero represents: flexibility, humility, humour, generosity, sympathy, affection, etc. With his peculiar reading of *The Shan Van Vocht* the narrator is defending the flexibility of the comic hero and the values he represents, such as humility, sympathy, generosity, etc.

At other times humour is generated by the spontaneous behaviour of the narrator and his friends. We have a clear example when the boy goes to the cinema with a group of friends, among them the girl he likes. The movie they choose is a thriller and the comments they make in a loud voice during the showing cannot be funnier. As soon as the film starts one of the boys encourages the others to lay bets on what is going to happen and who is the murderer, whereas others get into a "ferocious" argument about the differences between tea and coffee after watching a scene in which the heroine makes coffee. When someone from the audience starts crying because a woman is going to be killed and nobody warns her, one of the boys shouts: "Hi, Miss, you're going to be killed" (160), which generates the laughter of some of the people in the cinema. At the end they discover that the killer is the heroine's father and the reaction of one of the girls again makes the audience laugh: "'Her da?' squealed Sheila in disbelief. 'He wouldn't kill his own daughter.' 'ANIMAL!' she roared at the screen. The people around us laughed." (160).

It is not only the behaviour of the narrator's friends that gives humour to the whole episode at the cinema, but the attitude of the narrator towards his "beloved". When one of the boys tells a joke in a loud voice and Irene does not get it, the narrator gives so much importance to her reaction, as if it were something unforgivable, that we cannot help smiling: "A pang crossed my stomach. She didn't get *that*?" (159). In spite of Irene's "serious imperfection", the narrator is still attached to her and, as a matter of fact, uses Irene to measure the extent to which he is overwhelmed by the film's ending: "I was horrified. I forgot Irene." (160)

Although children lack the prejudices of the adults, they nevertheless share with them certain hesitation to talk about a series of topics, among them sex. One of the most comic scenes takes place when the school's Spiritual Director, Father Nugent, summons the narrator to his room in order to explain him "the facts of life". If the boy is nervous, the priest does not seem any calmer. As a matter of fact, the poor narrator is toasting because, although it is a warm day, Nugent has a fire blazing to create a cosy atmosphere. In spite of the priest's desire to make the child feel comfortable, as soon as he starts explaining "the facts of life" the narrator becomes so confused and embarrassed that he nods all the time appreciatively like a puppet, although he hardly hears or understands what the priest is saying. This generates a lot of comic moments, especially when the narrator becomes aware of the fact that the priest has asked him a question and he, instead of answering, is just moving his head up and down:

> He was looking at me questioningly. He must have asked me something. I changed my expression to try to look quizzical, raising my eyebrows and widening my eyes.
>
> "Do you?"
>
> Bereaved Christ's mother, do I what? What do I do? Should I pretend to faint from the heat? Would someone not knock at the door? In total gratitude, I heard him go on before I could get my tongue off the roof of my mouth. (152)

At other times we smile at the child's reactions to the priest's explanations. So the narrator does not think that it is very delicate of Nugent to remind him that he was born of his parents: "This I knew, but didn't think it mannerly to say so in any raucous fashion." (150) Nevertheless, when Nugent says that he is going to explain the act of sexual intercourse, the narrator's face brightens and his curiosity lights up because what he has heard so far seems improbable: "It sounded like a feat of precision engineering, one I could never quite associate with what the Church called lust, which seemed wild, fierce, devil-may-care, like eating and drinking together while dancing to music on top of the table." (150) But, although Nugent tries to clarify the narrator's doubts, sometimes his comments just generates the narrator's confusion because he does not understand what the priest is talking about. We find a clear example when Nugent uses the term "appetite" to refer to sex and adds:

> "You know that phrase—about appetite?" asked Father Nugent.
>
> I looked at him, appalled. Was this something I was supposed to know?
>
> "It's Shakespeare, I believe. One of the plays."
>
> The *plays*. I had thought there was only the one, *The Merchant of Venice*, which we were reading and rehearsing in third year. This man was ready for the asylum. Soon I would be too. (155)

One of the reasons why the narrator cannot follow the priest's explanations is because he uses Latin words that he cannot comprehend and which leave him in a state of total bewilderment:

> "When the enlarged penis enters the vagina, seed is emitted."
>
> Emitted? Holy Christ, emitted? He-mit-it? He-mid-it? What word was that? I forced my voice out.
>
> "He what?"
>
> Father Nugent paused, eyebrows raised. "He…?
>
> Then he caught on.
>
> "Oh, emitted. From the Latin, *emittere*, to send out. The seed is sent out."
>
> This puzzled me. It seemed a very distant procedure.
>
> "You mean he sends it to her?" In what? I wanted to ask. An envelope? In a wee parcel? What, in the name of Christ, was this nutcase talking about?
>
> "In a sense. The more technical word is 'ejaculated'."
>
> Oh, from the Latin, I knew he would say, as he did. Thank you, father. Now he's throwing it out, like a spear. And semen is the Latin for seed. Do you have to know Latin to do this? (151)

The poor narrator asks himself how his parents have been able to perform the sexual act without a good grounding in Latin roots and comes to the conclusion that the sacrament of marriage gives you this knowledge spontaneously.

Another device that Deane uses to introduce humour in the novel is to make the narrator reproduce what he has heard the eldest saying. The same words that pronounced by the latter would sound serious and sad, when repeated by a child who would not usually used such terms, seem totally incongruous. So, for example, he finishes the story of priest who tried to perform an exorcism but failed because the devil came back again, with the following statement: "You could never be up to the devil" (10). A small child would never reach that conclusion and it is obvious that he is just repeating what others have said before.

We have a similar case when the narrator tells us that on one occasion his mother saw his father's mother, long dead, and adds: "My mother had a touch of the other world about her. So people would say." (51) But we find the best example when the narrator decides to explain the story of his great-uncle Constantine, "the sole family heretic" (116), who abandoned his religious faith after reading Voltaire, an author forbidden by the Catholic Church, and because of it went blind:

> Then he went blind, became ill and caved in by being restored to the bosom of the Church before he died. The blindness was a judgement and a warning, we were told. Thank God he had heeded it, but no wonder, for his sainted mother, Isabella —or Bella, for short— had worn out her knees praying for his soul. Lord, she was the happy woman when he died, escorted into heaven by the Last Sacraments and wee Father Gallagher from the Long Tower parish.... (117)

A child would never use expressions such as "restored to the bosom of the church" or "Lord, she was the happy woman", but he is repeating the facts exactly as they were told to him by the adults and this is why humour impregnates the whole extract.

So far we have seen the different ways in which Deane exploits the narrator's naivety to play down false sentimentalism and melodrama and prevent the reader from falling into despair. With its commitment to life comedy emerges as a liberating and positive force that helps us survive and face the small and big dramas of our lives. The comic mode allows us to see the most painful situations from a different perspective and thus becomes one of the most valuable weapons human beings have to transcend grief.[2] The narrator's parents illustrate this reality very well, but in different ways. Although the father is tormented by the fact that his brother Eddie was an informer, he tries to overcome his pain and not destroy the life of those he loves most. And in this struggle to face everyday life and win the battle against despair the father does not give up one of the elements that can help him transcend his grief: humour. We find a clear example the day he takes his two sons to the church to tell them what he thinks is the truth about

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[2] It is important to point out that humour is a subject that in the last decades has fascinated psychologists and psychiatrists and attracted a good deal of interest in terms of what humour is, how it works, and how it might be used for therapeutic purposes. Thus, Martin, Kuiper, Olinger and Dance in their article "Humour, Coping with Stress, Self-Concept, and Psychological Well-Being" have argued that humour is linked with a more positive orientation towards self, more positive and self-protective cognitive appraisals in the face of stress and greater positive affect in response to both positive and negative life events. On the other hand, well-known psychologists such as Walter E. O'Connell, Harvey Mindess or Viktor Frankl have proved the usefulness of laughter as a therapeutic agent by helping patients utilize their sense of humour as a means of dealing with painful emotions and situations. The case of Frankl is particularly revealing, since he survived Auschwitz and Dachau and fully understands the liberating power of laughter: "Unexpectedly most of us were overcome with a grim sense of humor. We knew we had nothing to lose except our ridiculously naked lives.... Humor was another of the soul's weapons in the fight for self-preservation.... Humor more than anything else in the human make-up can afford an aloofness and an ability to rise above any situation, if only for a few seconds." (Cit. in Morreall, 1983: 104)

Eddie. When they go into the church and the narrator and his brother Liam kneel down and start praying in awkwardly devotional attitudes, the father exclaims: "'Oh, c'mon, don't make a meal of it,' he laughed, 'you can pray as well without trying to look like little saints.'" (132) The important thing here is that, although it is a moment of great pressure, the father is capable of distancing himself from what is happening and seeing its comic side. The narrator's father also shows a great capacity for accommodation and flexibility one day when he is playing cards with his brothers-in-law and one of them starts joking about such a painful topic as Eddie's and McIlhenny's disappearance. Instead of becoming hostile or reserved, as if the telling of a joke were an affront to the past, the father decides to participate in the general laughter, thus showing that everyday life has not got just one reading and that in face of painful and serious facts it is possible to adopt a comic perspective without trivializing them:

> Why did McIlhenny not come back or at least send for his wife and child? Those skyscrapers in Chicago are so high, said Dan, you could drink a bottle of whiskey on the top floor and you'd have a hangover before you were halfway down —even if you used a parachute. They all laughed and cut the cards again.... (38-9)

The narrator's mother, on the other hand, is incapable of distancing herself from the past that is destroying her and has got trapped in her suffering. Humour has disappeared from her life; nor does she tolerate it in others. So, when one of her brothers says that the good thing about Sergeant Burke's sons becoming priests is that at least no more Burkes will be bred, and another answers: "I wouldn't bet on that.... They just won't carry the name, that's all" (195), everybody but the narrator's mother laughs. It is obvious that the police have made life very hard for her and her brothers, but whereas the latter use humour to transcend their sorrow, the former is only capable of seeing life from that absolute seriousness that plunges her into the blackest despair and fear. It is not a question of trivializing the terrible events of the past, but of getting hold of the lifebelt of humour in order to try to cope with all that intimidates us, as the mother's brothers do. Hyers has explained it very well: "... humour is not irreverent or irresponsible, but a moral and spiritual necessity. Without humor we become something less, not more, than human. We become not more divine but more demonic." (74) The narrator himself becomes aware of his mother's hostility and excessive seriousness when he promises her to get distinctions in every subject, but gets a pass in Art:

> When I got nine —with a pass in Art— she asked what happened to the promise of ten. I told her I broke it. I was joking. She was not.
>
> "So you did. So you did," she replied. (215)

Of course, humour is not going to solve the mother's problem, but it can help her to get out of this dark prison in which she has locked herself.

There is a character who is vital in *Reading in the Dark* not only because he exerts a decisive influence on the narrator's life, but because he fulfils the role of the jester and, therefore, incarnates to perfection what Hyers calls the comic spirit. According to Hyers one of the main functions of the jester was to close the door to absolutism and dogmatism, which were the product of a serious and tragic vision of life. This comic figure not only made kings laugh at themselves, but allowed others, indirectly, to laugh at them: "They provided a comic restraint to the inherent possibilities of royal power and authority." (111) Through the jesters rulers were deprived of their sacred character and permitted to be what they really were: human beings like any one else, who participated in the frailties and follies of the human condition. Kings were able to view reality from a perspective other than the official and thus preserved both their sanity and humanity. Hyers emphasizes that the jester mocked not only political but also spiritual kingdoms and, as a matter of fact, Jesus "... was a fool's Messiah, a donkey-deliverer, a jester to the political and ecclesiastical kingdoms of earth" (119). His entrance into Jerusalem was absolutely demystifying, riding not in a steed-drawn chariot of power and glory but on a simple donkey.

The main function of the jester was, then, to profane the categories and hierarchies with which we want to capture and domesticate reality. The jester refused to take any human pretensions or demarcations with absolute seriousness: "Hence, the neat patterns of rationality and value and order with which we organize and solidify our experience are confused and garbled. Sense is turned into nonsense, order into disarray, the unquestionable into the doubtful." (129) The jester did not fit into the established conventions or structures and through his foolishness he has given us a great lesson of wisdom.[3]

The jester was the great truth-teller, the only one who dared tell the king the truth. Hyers explains that the jester enjoyed such a freedom of action and speech because the social distance between him and the king was so great —like that between child and adult— that his comments would never constitute a threat to royal authority and power. Therefore the jester could deal with the king directly and straightforwardly, whereas the others, including the king himself, had to adapt themselves to the protocol of the court.

For Hyers the jesters, who fulfilled such an important role in ancient, medieval, and renaissance societies, are now comic actors, comedians, clowns, mimes, cartoonists, poets and artists, circus performers, sideshow attractions, or residents of state asylums. This reference to mental hospitals is very significant, because there is a character in *Reading in the Dark*, Joe, who, although a patient and not a doctor, clearly incarnates the figure of the jester. Behind his mask of foolishness Joe shows a wisdom that many sane people would like to have.

Crazy Joe is the "official lunatic" of the town and his grotesque aspect and behaviour seem to confirm it: "Sometimes his false teeth shifted in and out; sometimes he seemed unaccountably close to tears; mostly, he beamed fiercely, clanking the railings with his walking stick or stomping it on the ground for emphasis. His head swung back and forth endlessly." (83) He is regularly consigned for periods to Gransha, the local asylum, where he is beaten by the male nurses or plunged in baths of freezing water when he irritates them in any way. This explains why every time he comes out again instead of feeling better and calmer he seems more disturbed and upset. But the worst thing is that Joe is not just another lunatic whose family, from time to time, put him into the asylum because of his violent attitude, like when he pulls books from the shelves in the library and throws them on the floor, but a man who is conscious of his madness and suffers considerably as a result:

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[3] Enid Welsford has expressed herself in similar terms in her book *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (1935). Welsford claims that the fool has played an important role in literature and history not because "the fool is a creator of beauty, but (rather because he is the creator) of ... freedom". The fool is "not only physically, but morally and spiritually resilient" and for this reason he consoles us because he shows "that Death is a hoax and that the whole world does not bear the tree on which (a clever fool such as) Marcolf can be hanged" (cit. in Pollio and Edgerly, 1996: 216).

> To live with this condition of his was, he said, the great connubium of his infelicity —the condition of being sane married to the condition of being mad; the knowledge that he was mad married to the knowledge that he was sane; knowing that he was harmless but that his condition made others harmful. And people thought he wasn't married! He was as unhappily married as anyone he knew. (212)

Joe does not live in a world of fantasy, but is aware of his own reality, his limitations and contradictions, and does not mind laughing at himself:

> I was a young man, then. Not so mad then, I think, but on my way, on my way. (192)
>
> "I'm off," he announced, "and when I see you again, you'll be a lot older. But I'll be the same age as I ever was."
> He tapped his forehead with his finger, beaming at me.
> "Eternal youth. The secret of the insane." (193)

It is obvious that Joe is not totally sane and, as a matter of fact one moment he is crying remembering his days in the asylum and the next starts smiling again. But what is really important is that many of statements he makes throughout the novel reveal great insight and a knowledge of the world as well as deep wisdom. When Joe behaves in a violent way in the library and throws the books on the floor, what he is doing is attacking the way in which they are used by fanatics to impose their ideas, as happens in Northern Ireland, where everybody uses religion as the excuse to carry out the most barbarous and inhuman atrocities: "That's a good one, religious prejudice. He should have lived here, then he'd have seen...." (189) Nobody in their right mind would dare to tell a truth like this, but since Joe is "mad" he is free to describe reality as it is. In a country where religion is the beginning and end of people's lives Joe has even got the courage to question God's existence: "'God's only excuse is that he does not exist,'... Isn't that a good one..." (188). Joe says these words one of the times he comes out of the asylum and, taking into account the way in which he is treated in the mental hospital, his statement, although shocking for a believer, makes much sense. Joe, like the jester, questions and profanes established conventions and destroys the division that men and women set up between madness and sanity, showing how absurd human judgement can be.

But Joe does not only undermine categories and hierarchies; he has very important information about the narrator's family and especially about his mother. He was the one who saw McIlhenny get out of a police car and told the narrator's mother about it. She immediately warned her brother-in-law that his cover was blown and advised him to leave the country to avoid being executed by his own people. Joe is the only one, together with the narrator's mother, who knows these facts and throughout the years he has been faithful and has kept the secret. But when he meets the narrator and realizes that he is trying to reconstruct the past, joining all the pieces together, he decides to show him the way to follow: "It was Crazy Joe who almost completed the story for me." (188) In other words, the man who is rejected by everybody because he is just a poor lunatic who does not know or understand the world around him is the one who opens the narrator's eyes and makes him realize what happened in the past. What is really interesting about Joe is that instead of telling his young friend the events straight away, he wants him to think for himself and deduce the truth with the help of the clues he gives him: "His aim was, he said, to give me a little of the education I so sorely lacked but at least had the decency to want." (83) As a matter of fact, Joe's "speeches" are full of questions, conundrums and stories about women who became animals, through which he tries to arouse the narrator's curiosity and make him draw his own conclusions. In spite of his madness Joe realizes that the narrator is a clever and shrewd boy and therefore wants to help him exploit his mental capacity:

> "… I want to teach you something. But do me one favour. Repay me by not always being such a young idiot. Don't spend your life as a pupil. It's insulting. You're always running around like a dog, sniffing at the arse of every secret, a dirty habit. Copulate if you must. Get it over and done with. Then grow up. Now, let my arm go. I want a rest." (189)

He frequently uses terms such as "little savage", "idiot" or "stupid" to refer to the narrator, because, although everybody thinks he is a fool, a lunatic, he is wise enough to know that he has before him an uncut diamond that if polished adequately will shine like gold.

In his *Anatomy of Criticism* Northrop Frye argues that comedy is the mythos of spring and therefore contains the basic elements of death and resurrection, whereas tragedy has got trapped in the vision of the heroic death. This explanation is perfectly applicable to *Reading in the Dark*, a political, but not a propagandistic novel, in which in spite of the hatred, the lies that cause pain and the truths that destroy, life triumphs over death and love over resentment. It is precisely this capacity to transcend what is merely political and recreate in a poetic style a human drama which transforms *Reading in the Dark* into a universal work of art.

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Ireland on Screen. A View from Spain

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ABSTRACT

The essay considers the vast output of existing cinematic representations of Ireland, prior to discussing one of its main strands —the persistent representation of Ireland as a pastoral Arcadia— and its most exemplary piece: John Ford's film *The Quiet Man* (1952). It is argued that despite being credited with fostering an amusing and condescending visual image of stage Irishness Ford gives plenty of clues for viewing his portrayal critically. These have been missed by audiences world-wide but are picked up and elaborated on four decades later by Spanish film director José Guerín in his film *Innisfree* (1990).

KEYWORDS: Ireland; cinematic representation; national stereotyping; emigrant's idealisation of Ireland.

Ireland and the Irish have featured prominently on the screen, as attested to by Kevin Rockett's wide-ranging directory *The Irish Filmography* (1996), which lists some 2,000 Irish-related films made world-wide in the first 100 years of cinema. Given the substantial presence of Irish Americans in American society and in Hollywood in particular,[1] quite predictably a large number of the films have been made in the USA. As Joseph Curran (1989) —the author of the most

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[1] Some 42 million citizens of the United States currently claim Irish descent. Moreover, since the inception of Hollywood, a large number of Irish Americans worked in the studios as directors, scriptwriters, and actors.

comprehensive survey of the screen portrayal of the Irish Americans up to the mid-eighties— has suggested, it is probably true to say that the Irish have been Hollywood's pet ethnic minority, for not only have they received more ample treatment than any other immigrant community, but they have generally been depicted in a favourable way.

However, upon looking into this cinematic corpus it soon becomes evident that the bountiful size does not go hand in hand with a bountiful array of images and stories. On the contrary, Hollywood's screen portrayal of Ireland and the Irish has been highly selective and consistently unrealistic, thus contributing to creating, and perpetuating, a series of stereotypes about the country and its inhabitants. British cinema —the second largest producer of Irish-related films— has contributed a similarly limited range of cinematic representations, though in this case the tenor of the portrayals tends to be less flattering than Hollywood's, centring as they do round the figure of 'the fighting Irishman' pray to atavistic violent impulses, whether in the past or in the recent Northern Irish conflict. As to indigenous Irish cinema, its steady development since Jim Sheridan's *My Left Foot* won two Oscars in 1989 is now allowing Irish people to have a say in their representation on the screen. A series of docu-dramas, as well as romantic or farcical comedies have begun to explore the changed realities of the so-called 'Celtic Tiger' and of Northern Ireland in the post-Agreement period. However, probably because Irish productions need to attract international audiences in order to be competitive in the global marketplace, the new batch of Irish-made films often compromise with the long-established conventions.

Indeed, if it weren't for gems like John Huston's *The Dead* (1987) and Neil Jordan's *The Butcher Boy* (1998), and a few other noteworthy examples such as John Ford's *The Informer* (1935), Pat O'Connor's *The Ballroom of Romance* (1982), Thaddeus O'Sullivan's *December Bride* (1990), David Caffrey's *Divorcing Jack* (1998) or Atom Egoyan's *Felicia's Journey* (1999), one would feel tempted to subscribe to film critic Gerry McCarthy's comment that "[w]here Ireland is concerned, even the most talented and tough-minded film-makers succumb to the lure of the whimsical" (2001). McCarthy cites Francis Ford Coppola's and John Sayles's respective "mythological blarneys" *Finian's Rainbow* (1968) and *The Secret of Roan Inish* (1993) as the weakest spots in these directors' reputable cinematography, but the list of Irish-themed movies that capitalise on the Irish diaspora's maudlin sentiment about the far-off homeland, or on the current trendiness of things Irish could easily be enlarged with titles such as Ted Nicolaou's *Leapin' Leprechauns* (1994), Mark Joffe's *The Matchmaker* (1997) or Aileen Ritchie's *The Closer You Get* (1999). All of them rely on a sloppy sort of pseudo-Irishism built round a series of circumstantial iconic signs: an idyllic rural setting unsullied by the stresses of modernisation, the characters' heavy drinking and rowdy temper, lots of blarney and a handful of sentimental ballads.

The images of this discursive construction of Ireland hardly conform to the harsh conditions prevailing in early and mid twentieth-century Ireland or to the industrialised make-up and consumerist ethos of the present-day Celtic Tiger. However, they have been so fully disseminated over different sign systems —whether balladry, Bord Failte's advertising campaigns, or John Hinde's postcards of touched-up photographs of pristine thatched cottages, stone walls, and children with donkeys beneath Connemara's fanciful Mediterranean skies, that any representation of Ireland which is not formulated within these parameters is likely "to be quite literally 'unreadable' to a wide, international audience" (McArthur, 1994: 119). A recent example of the resistance among cinema spectators to recognising or sympathising with any image of Ireland that challenges received views was provided by the lukewarm reception accorded to *The Butcher Boy* —a film where audience expectations of Irish rural imagery are literally shattered on watching a panoramic view of a lake surrounded by green hills disintegrate in a nuclear explosion— as opposed to the box-office success of cliché-ridden *Waking Ned Devine* (1998).[2]

In the vast output of existing cinematic representations of Ireland the most widely-known film and the one that has become the main purveyor of popular images about Ireland and the Irish abroad is undoubtedly John Ford's *The Quiet Man* (1952), the amusing account of an Irish-American's arrival in Ireland in search of a simple life he cannot find in the competitive and industrialised USA. Fifty years after it was shot on the west of Ireland, it remains the most popular film ever made about that country.[3] Paradoxically, it is also one of the most consistently misread. Indeed, although *The Quiet Man* brims with unabashed sentiment, nostalgia, and rowdy physical comedy, it does not foster the simplistic and uncritical stage Irishness it is usually held responsible for. Underlying its deceptively clichéd surface the film addresses the expatriate's innate mythopoeic impulse to construct Ireland as a pastoral Arcadia of the mind. By doing so, Ford engages with one of the most persistent tropes in Irish culture, its quintessential example being William Butler Yeats's Innisfree.

Innisfree (from the Gaelic *Inis Fraoich*, the heather island) is the name of a tiny island in Lough Gill, to the south-east of Sligo town, which was immortalised by Yeats in one of his best-known poems, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (*The Rose*, 1893). Written at a time when the poet lived in London with his family, and "felt very homesick" (Kirby, 1977: 46), "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" expresses a nostalgic longing for a simple country life apart from the stresses of urban life that places it within a pastoral tradition. For pastoral, as Marinelli reminds us "is the art of the backward glance, and Arcadia from its creation the product of wistful and melancholy longing" (Marinelli, 1971: 9).

Since pastoral literature springs out of a sense of loss, when an ideal and more innocent world "is felt to be lost, but not so wholly as to destroy the memory of it" (Marinelli, 1971: 9), it is no wonder that Ireland, with its long experience of emigration and exile, has proved an extremely rich breeding ground for versions of pastoral. The large number of people of Irish ancestry spread all over the world reveals that the return to the homeland has rarely come true, but the journey back to the green native fields is one that has been rehearsed time and again by the Irish imagination, and which has been duly recorded in song, literature and the cinema.

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[2] I have discussed this aspect at length in "*The Butcher Boy*. The Difficulty of Transcending the Image of Ireland as Modernity's Other" (2000). In Coperías, M. J. (Ed.), *Culture and Power: Challenging Discourses* (pp.199-207). Valencia: Servei de Publicacions Universitat de Valencia.

[3] It is still periodically screened on TV around the world —mostly on or around St. Patrick's Day— and it finds its way onto most film hit parades. Thus, it occupies nº 76 on the list of the *American Film Institute Top 100 Most Passionate Films of All Time* announced on June 2002, and nº 87 and nº 217 respectively on the box office list of *Mr. Showbiz 100 Greatest Movies (1931-1994)* and the *Internet Movie Datebase 250 Top Film* (http://www.centurybo.com/Century/best-showbiz.htm, http://us.imdb.com/top_250_films, accessed 21st Aug 2002).

The image of the homeland evoked, though, differs substantially: the degree of sentimental idealisation Ireland is subject to increases in geometric proportion to the distance and period of absence the expatriate has been separated from her. Whereas in most emigrant songs "the dear island across the Irish sea" is conceived as a sort of *Tír na nÓg*, the fabled land of youth and plenty, literary accounts of return journeys usually convey a less rosy picture. Thus, whereas speaking from hearsay, the son in "Skibbereen" pictures Ireland as "a lovely land wherein a prince might dwell" and blames Britain for all the country's problems, a long list of writers, from George Moore to Brian Moore, offer a much more realistic —and often critical— view of the cultural and social restrictions of Irish life through the figure of returned Americans. As John Wilson Foster points out in connection with Ulster fiction, the 'returned American' "is a veritable character-type in Bullock, St John Ervine, Friel, Kiely, Brian Moore and Maurice Leitch, so common indeed that it is normally meant to convey instantly either comic pomposity or pathetic disenchantment" (Foster, 1974: 6).

Indeed, the gamut of situations described and the tone in which they are approached vary greatly, ranging from elegiac treatments of the subject to caricaturesque vignettes. Thus, John Montague's attempt to decipher the landscape of his home area, to read its past and "the unhappiness of its historical destiny", in the "Home Again" section of *The Rough Field* (1972), and his bitter realisation that "no Wordswordian dream enchants [him]", contrasts sharply with a burlesque story such as "Homes on the Mountain" in which Benedict Kiely attacks the romanticisation of rural Ireland. An over-idealisation deriving from the emigrant's nostalgic longing for home, but also promoted in Ireland by a persistent political and literary discourse whereby rural Ireland is seen as the only legitimate embodiment of 'true' Irishness. Through the apparently naive perspective of a twelve-year-old boy Kiely pokes fun at a couple of returned Americans who exchange "the comfort of Philadelphia" for "the bleak side of Dooish Mountain" (Kiely, 1977: 76) as well as at the patriotic *Irish Fireside Songs* describing the Emerald Isle as "a little bit of Heaven [that] fell from out the sky one day", the repeated recitation of which earns for the young narrator "a steady downpour of half-crowns" (Kiely, 1977: 88).

Writers from the south have also dealt with the figure of the returned emigrant on many occasions. George Moore's late story "Home Sickness", included in the 1931 edition of *The Untilled Field*, provides an interesting treatment of the theme by highlighting the ambivalent attitude to the homeland which underlines the creation of many versions of Irish pastoral. After spending thirteen years in America, James Bryden returns to his native Mayo where he soon grows disenchanted with the oppressive atmosphere of defeat he observes among the villagers, and especially with their submissiveness to the dictates of the puritanical and intolerant priest over matters of sexual morality. Although the protagonist's attitude towards Ireland would seem to give support to Moore's own bitter remark in *Hail and Farewell* that "an Irishman must fly from Ireland if he would be himself" (Moore, 1920: 3), the end of the story belies this notion. In his last years Bryden realises that the memory of his native fields is more real to him than his American life. As Avery points out in her book on the Irish short story, even though Moore implies that escape is necessary for economic and emotional survival, "[h]is mind retains compelling memories of the beauty and peace of the landscape and the special traditions of Irish life" (Avery, 1982: 37-8). Even if the return home often turns out to be an anticlimactic or disappointing experience, the emigrant is haunted by the idea of going back to the paradise she or he has conjured up in their mind by an act of the mythopoeic imagination.

Yeats's vision of the lake isle of Innisfree partakes of this process of mythopoeic idealisation of the rural west of Ireland. Dissatisfied with his present situation, the poet longs to return to the green pastures linked to an earlier and happier period. But although Yeats imagines Innisfree as a fairly idyllic place, he does not picture it as *Tír na nÓg*, a paradise of pleasurable idleness. On the contrary, the kind of rural myth articulated in the poem conceives of human existence in terms of a life of solitary retirement and productive rural activity, of self-discovery by way of discipline.

Aspiration towards a Horatian *aurea mediocritas* in which happiness is achieved by reconciling human dignity and the moderate ambitions of country existence also informs the short story "The Quiet Man" (1933). Though not a particularly distinguished specimen of the Irish tale about a returned emigrant, "The Quiet Man" has become the paradigmatic example of its kind. Indeed, although its author, the Kerryman Maurice Walsh (1879-1964), is not even mentioned in the nearly 4,000 pages that make up *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (1991), his story has been continuously in print since the Irish-American director John Ford adapted it for the screen twenty years after he had read it in the *Saturday Evening Post*. The film had immediate popular success, not only in Ireland, where it was premiered in May 1952, but in America and elsewhere. When running in Paris it was reputed to have grossed more than the legendary *Gone with the Wind* (Matheson, 1985: 73, 91), and in Spain, where it was first shown in November 1954, it was hailed as the latest wonder in Technicolor, and as Ford's masterpiece (Picas, 1954: 20).

The uninterrupted popularity of Ford's film has led to a situation whereby the term 'The Quiet Man' and the placename 'In[n]isfree' owe their popular currency almost exclusively to the film. And since Ford's *The Quiet Man* departs quite substantially from its literary sources, freely modifying the plot of Walsh's short story and changing the location (and the spelling) of Yeats's Innisfree, the ideas evoked by the two terms, and the notions they have come to embody in most people's mind have moved a long way from the original literary models. Indeed —and this is the strand I want to pursue here— they have even moved a long way from the actual meaning that Ford confers on them.

In fact, Ford's film has greatly contributed to popularising, if not to creating, an amusing and condescending visual image of stage Irishness but, as noted above, this is no doubt a most intriguing and paradoxical case of collective misinterpretation. As a series of perceptive critics (Anderson, 1952; McBride, 1974; Campbell, 1978; Gibbons, 1988, 2002; Pettitt, 2000 and McLoone, 2000) have pointed out, once the tensions beneath the dreamlike surface of Ford's film are perceived, it becomes quite apparent that the idealised Ireland of the expatriate myth which *The Quiet Man* is supposed to have fostered is in fact strongly contested through subtle, but quite unequivocal means.

And even if, as I shall argue later on, the film is still open to the charge of romanticising —and trivialising— the reality of Irish life in a rural area, the way Ford mediates the story of the returned American gives plenty of hints to lead the audience to view it critically. That is, from the beginning the film foregrounds its own artificiality, revealing its status as an imaginary fabrication and not as a realistic "slice of life". Thus, the opening scene at the station introduces the theme of the journey —an archetypal motif of a metaphorical quest— and places the action in the springtime —the traditional season for rebirth and renewal (Santaolalla, 1992: 46-7). Significantly, though, no recognisable historical time is mentioned. Consequently, the audience's imagination is driven away into an atemporal, and unlocated, country of the mind. In fact, even though Sean Thornton, the returned American, asks for directions to go to Inisfree (*sic*), the local people at the railway station cannot agree about how to get there for, as the stationmaster informs Sean, even the signpost bearing the name Inisfree "is pointing the wrong way". Eventually, old Michaeleen comes out of nowhere to escort Sean to Inisfree, to the surprise of the local people who comment: "I wonder now why a man would want to go to Inisfree" as they place themselves behind a wall to peer at the two men vanishing. The fact that they stare at the screen seems to be a way of inviting us to join in their speculations and make up an entertaining story, thus drawing a distinction between fiction and reality.

The special character of the narrating voice chosen by Ford to tell the tale of the returned American endorses even further the suggestion that the story belongs to the country's rich oral tradition, and that *The Quiet Man* has become part of the community's lore. In the opening scene of the film, the story is told by an unidentified voice-over narrator, who later on identifies himself as Father Lonergan. However, it soon becomes evident that this narrator provides accounts of events he has not witnessed. Since Lonergan is not a completely reliable narrator, and his is not a first-hand account of the story, the reader should not take it at face value. As Santaolalla remarks "the film as a whole could be considered as one more instance of the many tellings and retellings that the story of Sean Thornton and Mary Kate Danaher has probably met and will surely meet in the course of time" (Santaolalla, 1992: 50).

In order to highlight the artificial character of his film Ford resorts to another metafictional device, when towards the end a crowd of villagers who have been waving to the visiting Protestant bishop, feigning to be his parishioners, start waving directly at the audience. As Luke Gibbons has pointed out, this can be interpreted as a way "to remind us both of the presence of the camera and the fact that we too are in the position of the bishop, viewing a mere pretence, a *representation* of community" (Gibbons, 1988: 240).

The film provides many more instances of the tension between make-believe and reality, from the inclusion of studio inserts in the exterior sequences —which highlight the artificiality of Sean's vision at key moments such as his first glimpse of the family cottage, while he hears the voice of his dead mother enthusing about how pretty the cottage used to be— to Mrs Playfair's comment, on seeing Sean's reconstructed replica, that it is the most Irish looking cottage around, to Widow Tillane's myth-debunking question to Sean "Are you planning to turn 'White O'Morning' into a national shrine? And perhaps charge twopence a visit for a guided tour through the little thatched cottage where all the Thorntons were born?".

Even though the aspects of *The Quiet Man* that have been stressed so far are those that somehow debunk the stage Irishness with which the film has been traditionally associated, as remarked above, Ford's image of Ireland does not fully escape the romanticising tendency inherent in the expatriate's vision of the homeland. In fact, the film even displays some of the features which according to Kathryn Hume (1984: 62) are typical of pastoral fantasy such as "the freedom from responsibility", as illustrated by the fact that people's material needs seem to be met from no visible economic source, or the fact that although there is action and a certain amount of violence, there are no genuine catastrophes, no villains and no real suspense. Moreover, in line with pastoral's celebration of the simple life and communal traditions apart from the individualism and mercantile ethos which prevails in the modern world, the film provides a strong sense of community. This is reinforced by the pub singing scenes and long shots of crowd scenes, and is given a most extreme example when the dispute over Mary Kate's dowry is settled by means of a public brawl.

The film's emphasis on social cohesion rather than on individual gain is also reinforced by the fact that the story of *The Quiet Man* is embedded in a classical romantic comedy. Therefore, it follows the fixed pattern whereby a young couple must overcome a series of individual and social obstacles before they can finally get married and achieve individual and social reconciliation. The tensions arising from Ireland's troubled colonial history and the consequent complexity of the community's religious composition and political allegiances are not readily apparent. In fact, when Ford touches upon such issues, he does so in a very light-hearted way, as when Will Danaher says he'd rather join the Church of Ireland than shake Sean's hand as Father Lonergan bids him, or when Danaher amusingly asks "Is the IRA in it too?" as he sees Sean approach in a challenging attitude. Significantly, the question of who wins the ensuing mock-heroic fight is not in the least important, and the two rivals end up staggering arm-in-arm in drunken friendship.

This image, together with the quaint courtship scenes with the whole village gazing on in witness, as well as more outlandish episodes such as the old man who jumps up from his deathbed on hearing about the Donnybrook, would seem to be the ones most cherished in Spain, if one is to judge from Spanish press reviews, which invariably single them out for praise. The emphasis on quaint features, which is also characteristic of other American and British films about Ireland, has contributed to creating a vision of this country as an enclave of traditional values untainted by progress and industrialisation, a country with landscapes of magical beauty, inhabited by people with a romantic view of their heroic past, people who are whimsically unpragmatic, and who show a marked proclivity for violence. And despite the fact that, as John Hill (1988) has argued, some British films have tended to criminalise Irish violence, in general the Spanish conception of Irishness has been more benign and, in line with the Hollywood view, has tended to glorify Irish violence as a heroic form of resistance to colonial power.

Indeed, the issue of Ireland's colonial experience is one which many Spaniards view sympathetically, especially those from the peripheral historic regions of Catalonia and the Basque Country, who often draw parallels between the Irish question and their own conflicts with the centralist policy of Madrid. On the other hand, the fact that during the Counter-Reformation Ireland and Spain were closely related on account of their common religion and their common enmity for England, has led to the widespread belief in the existence of a marked affinity of temperament between the peoples of both countries, as expressed in Salvador de Madariaga's contention that the Irish are Spaniards who were stranded by mistake in the north of Europe (cited in O'Donoghue, 1992: 14). Madariaga's reference to the supposed Iberian origin of the mythological Milesians illustrates that perceptions of Ireland in Spain are often guided by instinctual rather than by empirical parameters. This trend has inevitably led to highly unrealistic notions of Ireland and the Irish.

As if to compensate for the fact that deceptive cinematic images, and particularly the misreading of Ford's *The Quiet Man*, are much to blame for this situation, an attempt to redress it was carried out, quite appropriately, through a film that explicitly declares its connection to Ford's. Written and directed by José Luis Guerín, the film is entitled *Innisfree* (1990), a name which carries unequivocal Fordian resonances in Spain for even though Yeats's "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" was first published in 1957 in a small bilingual anthology containing 16 poems, and has been reprinted a few times since, it is with *The Quiet Man* rather than with Yeats's poem that Spanish people associate Innisfree. Indeed, Ford's film has been so influential as a repository of images of Ireland that its setting has almost become a generic term for the country. A notion which has even been endorsed by prestigious Spanish film reviewers like the late José Luis Guarner who, in an uncharacteristic gesture for such a perceptive critic, went as far as providing a spurious etymology of the term Innisfree, explaining that it is the Gaelic word for Ireland, meaning "free island" (Guarner, 1990).

Awareness of the role Hollywood has played in the creation of deceptive notions about Ireland was what mainly prompted Guerín to shoot *Innisfree* for, as this director has explained (Malló, 1990; Flores, 1990), he realised that whenever he asked Spanish people about Ireland they invariably resorted to *The Quiet Man* as their main referent, mentioning the country's beautiful Technicolor scenery and her people's fondness for drink and music, but failing to perceive the repeated hints provided by Ford that give the lie to the emigrant's dream of Ireland.

Following a visit to the village of Cong, Co Mayo, the location Ford had chosen for his film thirty-seven years earlier, Guerín would also realise the potent effect the shooting of *The Quiet Man* had had as "a late colonising wave which changed the economic, social and mental structures of the county" (Malló, 1990). In fact, the inhabitants of the area have almost come to see themselves in the way the film portrayed them. And not only has the place deliberately kept an old-world feel, but it has even appropriated as part of its lore alien elements that were introduced by Ford and his film crew during the shooting of *The Quiet Man* such as the Aran caps they wore, the ballads John Wayne used to sing, or expressions such as Michaeleen's "The horse's more sense than I have."

The currency of *The Quiet Man* as the most popular referent of Ireland within and outside the country serves two purposes for Guerín. On the one hand it allows him to undertake a sociological survey of a small Irish community which serves as a yardstick for the whole island and which contests many stereotypical views. On the other hand it helps to highlight the dialectic between reality and representation which is at the core of art. Guerín's *Innisfree*, which is presented as "Things seen and heard in and around Innisfree between 5th September and 10th October 1988" combines documentary and fictional elements. At a structural level it is like a palimpsest, a rewriting of *The Quiet Man* in which there can still be read many traces of the old version. For, even though the total amount of sequences from Ford's film comes to only four minutes, there are constant visual and verbal references to it: from black and white photos of the shooting of the film framed on walls, to the re-enacting of scenes from *The Quiet Man* like the escape of the courting couple on a bicycle, to reminiscences of local people who had known John Ford or who had actually featured in *The Quiet Man*. Prominent among them is his close friend Lord Killanin who dispels any doubt we might have about Ford's sentimental idealisation of Ireland by telling about his cynical attitude to rich "returned Americans" who on seeing the derelict house of their ancestors, which they had imagined as a castle, decide not to stop but drive on, thus giving rise to the expression "drive-on-cottages".

Whereas in Ford's film the community's sociological complexity is not readily apparent, *Innisfree* provides many insights into the community's past and present circumstances, as well as into the country at large. This is done through various complementary means. Sometimes a voice-over informs directly about such questions as land ownership and the traditional lack of a system of primogeniture, emigration patterns, or key historical events. More subtle and effective are a series of visual images, ranging from those which have a purely documentary function to others which play a highly symbolic role. Brief scenes of the everyday chores of the villagers reveal the gradual modernisation of the place, with shots of men milking, roof-thatching, gathering seaweed, spreading it on the fields, or making a hurling stick from an ashplant, juxtaposed with others showing a TV aerial being set up on top of a thatched roof, a boy travelling across the fields with his schoolbag to catch a school bus, or a pub dance attended by people of all ages in which lively traditional tunes give way to frenetic disco music.

A casual reference to the current Troubles in the North in a pub conversation leads an old man to reminisce about his revolutionary past and to conclude "we have long memories", a statement which reverberates throughout the film. Guerín conveys the importance of the burden of the past in Irish life very skilfully. At a thematic level, by presenting people seemingly paralysed by nostalgic memories, whether of historical events or of the shooting of *The Quiet Man* almost forty years earlier, as when a girl picks up a bowler hat that turns up to be the one Sean Thornton had flung in the famous courting scene when he and Mary Kate escape from their chaperone. At a structural level, by evading a diachronic narration Guerín creates the impression of frozen time. Indeed, the first half of the film, which includes many references to Ford's film, has no discernible chronology. Significantly, though, once a group of children finish summarising the plot of *The Quiet Man*, and we see "The End" on the screen, there begins a certain temporality, an intimation of everyday routine in the community.

Another visual image of great evocative impact Guerín resorts to is that of the cottage. On the one hand, the film opens with the derelict cottage of the O'Feeneys, i.e. John Ford's family, who emigrated to the States. Then there is the cottage used in *The Quiet Man*, i.e. the materialisation of an emigrant's dream of home. And finally, there is the fake reproduction of the cottage set up by a local publican for the sake of the tourists who flock into the village to buy souvenirs, and who, incidentally, are shown a false version of *The Quiet Man*. The ruins of an actual Irish cottage, its idealised image and a commercial forgery illustrate how far representations of Ireland have strayed from reality.

The continual misreading of *The Quiet Man* and the fact that Guerín's *Innisfree* has gone largely unnoticed reflect the recalcitrance of cinema audiences to acknowledge any discourse which challenges stereotypical views. Although in Spain people's image of Ireland is not coloured by the Irish diaspora's impulse to look back nostalgically on the far-off homeland and invest it with bucolic qualities, in its greenness and remoteness on the edge of Europe the Emerald Isle is still providing the modern western world with an equivalent of the ancient world's Arcadia and a repository of communal values. The recent commercial re-release of *Innisfree*, owing to a rekindling of interest in Guerín's work upon his being awarded the 2001 "Premio Nacional de Cine", and the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the shooting of *The Quiet Man*, provide two excellent occasions to review them, and to start reassessing hackneyed views of Ireland.[4]

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[4] An earlier version of the second part of this essay, entitled "In[n]isfree from Spain Via Hollywood" was presented at the XXV IASAIL Conference held at Hofstra University (USA) in July 1996.

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Ireland, Nostalgia and Globalisation: Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* on Stage and Screen

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ABSTRACT

In the context of an insightful comparison between Brian Friel and Tom Murphy in his recent *The Politics of Irish Drama* (1999), Nicholas Grene links Friel's much higher profile to the different ways in which the two playwrights negotiate the rural trope, and hence the representation of Ireland as 'modernity's other' within the context of an increasing globalisation. Grene, however, finds no room in *The Politics of Irish Drama* for a discussion of Friel's most successful play to date, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990). This article aims to explore the disparity between the phenomenal success of the play, as opposed to the critical and commercial failure of the film version (1998; dir. Pat O'Connor; script by Frank McGuinness). In the light of Luke Gibbons's (1996) argument as regards the role of nostalgia in late 20th-century Irish culture, and of Jean-François Lyotard's (1982) claim that the 'postmodern condition' is characterised by the absence of nostalgia, it is suggested that the divergent reception of the play and the film of *Dancing at Lughnasa*, both in Ireland and abroad, is a function of the different role played by memory and nostalgia in each. In addition, it possibly foregrounds a central paradox of postmodernity and globalisation, namely, the fact that a refusal of nostalgia is (inevitably) coupled with its 'other', i.e. a longing for origins, a desire for 'more authentic' modes of life.

KEYWORDS: Brian Friel; Irish drama; adaptation; film; reception; nostalgia; modernity; globalisation; postmodern condition; pastoral trope.

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IJES, vol. 2 (2), 2002, pp. 83-93

I.

In 1988, in his introduction to *Across the Frontiers: Ireland in the 1990s*, Richard Kearney described the current state of Ireland in the following bleak terms: "One third of the population of the Republic live below the poverty line; fifty thousand young people emigrate each year; over a quarter of a million are unemployed, with rates of up to 60 per cent in some of the new urban developments in Dublin; and inequality is growing rather than diminishing, with social welfare insufficient to meet the minimum needs of a large proportion of the people. The continuing bloodshed of the North speaks for itself" (1988: 7). Such a dismal situation signalled the collapse of the social and economic measures of the 1960s and 70s, implemented in the wake of Sean Lemass's appointment as Taoiseach in 1959, replacing Eamon de Valera (Gibbons, 1996: 82-84). The protectionist, backward-looking policies which had resulted in the stagnation of Irish political, economic and cultural life since the 1921 Partition Treaty were dismissed as the Republic embarked decisively on the path to industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation —welcoming foreign investment and multinational capital, joining the EEC in 1973, taking its place in the global communications village with the opening of Telefís Éireann in 1962, reforming the educational system, and relaxing its rigid religious and moral regime in the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) (Brown, 1985: 241-311). While the positive impact of such transformations was not always evenly distributed, they were perceived by contemporaries as a major turning point in the history of postcolonial Ireland, and it does seem legitimate to claim that, in general, conditions improved and self-confidence increased in Ireland over the 60s and 70s (Brown, 1985: 241; Cairns & Richards, 1988: 139). Such momentum, however, was to flounder in the mid- to late-1980s, leading to the disheartening state of affairs described by Kearney, in the face of which the essays in *Across the Frontiers* ask crucial questions about the future, with a particular focus on how the movement towards European integration (1992) and globalisation may affect Ireland. In practical terms, part of the answer to such questions came in the 1990s, when Ireland experienced an impressively swift economic growth and integration into the international order which, despite some obvious black spots and contradictions, led economist Kevin Gardiner to coin the label 'Celtic Tiger' in 1994 to describe the 'new' Ireland (González, 2000: 199).

This wave-like process of economic, social and political transformations has triggered an ongoing ideological debate —Brown (1985: 267-311) refers to the 60s and 70s as the 'Decades of Debate', a term which may clearly be extended to the present time— that revolves around inherited notions of national culture and identity. Prominent among them is the pastoral trope, which lies at the heart of Ireland's cultural inheritance and national self-image. As David Cairns and Shaun Richards, among many other commentators, have argued, "The economic malaise of 1950s Ireland ... was substantially a product of three decades of financial, economic, and social conservatism, in combination with cultural attitudes which, viewing the farmers as embodying the essence of the national ideal, sacrificed the material and cultural well-being of other groups to their interests" (1988: 139). Indeed, in post-1921 Ireland the peasants were proclaimed by organic intellectuals such as Daniel Corkery —picking up on a discourse of 'real Irishness' that had already been mobilised during the Revival of the turn of the century (O'Toole, 1985)— to be the descendants of the Gaelic society of the 17th century and earlier, and were therefore enshrined as embodying the 'true' essence of Ireland. Their conservative social, economic and cultural values, grounded in familism and Catholicism, became the backbone of the new State. Eamon de Valera himself, in his 1943 St Patrick's Day broadcast to the nation, articulated this pastoral self-image in a statement which has been parodied on innumerable occasions in more recent times: "... a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with sounds of industry, the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths, the laughter of comely maidens; whose firesides would be the forums of the wisdom of serene old age" (qtd. in Cairns & Richards, 1988: 133). Such idyllic rhetoric obviously clashed with the harsh realities of rural life at the time which, among other things, lay behind the haemorrhage of emigration, amounting to 500,000 people between 1945 and 1961 (Cairns & Richards, 1988: 139). As both Fintan O'Toole (1985) and Luke Gibbons (1996: 85-86) point out, the rural self-image was a metropolitan myth constructed by urban-based politicians, intellectuals and nostalgic emigrants at the turn of the century, a myth which would feed into the emergent culture of Irish nationalism and eventually into the post-1921 Free State. Yet this pastoral myth of the land has proved to have a very powerful grip not only on the Irish national self-image, but also on what may be termed a global discursive construction of Ireland as a pastoral site of origin.

II.

As two recent significant publications remind us, Irish drama since the turn of the century has become a crucial cultural practice in Ireland, deeply implicated in the construction and negotiation of discourses on the nation (Grene, 1999; Murray, 1997). A repeated focus of interest for playwrights has been precisely that of the pastoral trope. Indeed, in the context of an insightful comparison between the early playwriting careers of Brian Friel and Tom Murphy in his *The Politics of Irish Drama* (1999: 194-218), Nicholas Grene claims that Friel's much higher profile is a consequence of the fact that his plays have tended to confirm for metropolitan audiences at home and abroad, in the 'global village', a discursive construction of Ireland as the place of the pre-modern other, while Murphy has resisted such an iconography, opting instead for a fiercely anti-pastoral mode. This has made Friel 'readable' to metropolitan audiences, both domestic and international, in ways Murphy is not.[1] Grene (1999: 3) also acknowledges that he has found no room in *The Politics of Irish Drama* for a discussion of Friel's most successful play to date, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990). This paper aims to explore the reasons for the disparity between the phenomenal success of the play *Dancing at Lughnasa*, as opposed to the critical and commercial failure of the film version (1998; dir. Pat O'Connor; script by Frank McGuinness) —cinema being, of course, a fundamental signifying cultural practice of our time, one that operates within a global economy to a far greater extent than drama.[2]

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[1] Grene's book, *The Politics of Irish Drama* (1999), signals a major turning point as regards the historiography of 20th-century Irish drama. While previous explorations of the politics of Irish drama, such as Christopher Murray's *Twentieth-Century Irish Drama: Mirror up to a Nation* (1997), have been concerned primarily with the politics of the nation's theatrical self-expression, Grene's basic tenet is that Irish plays that are self-consciously about the representation of Ireland are directed outwards towards audiences both inside and outside Ireland. Grene's approach yields a series of lucid, fresh, immensely thought-provoking analyses of the work of a range of playwrights,

Dancing at Lughnasa may be described as a memory play which uses the favourite Frielian device of a framing narrative that turns the main action into a sustained flashback. The young man Michael casts his mind back to the summer of 1936, when he was seven; he both narrates the events which led to the dissolution of his family and the breakup of their world, and he non-naturalistically speaks the lines of the boy Michael within the narrated action. The family lives in a cottage outside Friel's fictional Ballybeg, a microcosm of rural Ireland, and is formed by the five unmarried Mundy sisters —Kate, an unyielding, primly efficient schoolteacher, the main breadwinner in the household; fun-loving, spirited Maggie; Rose, the simple, guileless sister; Agnes, stiff and reserved; and the youngest, Chris, Michael's mother. Michael's opening narrative links together some of the events that were going to change his and the sisters' lives for ever: the arrival of Uncle Jack who, after twenty-five years as a missionary in a remote village in Uganda, has been sent home for "going native" (Friel, 1990: 39); the pagan festival of Lughnasa, the old Celtic god of the harvest; the sisters' purchase of a Marconi wireless set on which they would listen to Irish music that would suddenly set them dancing "like excited schoolgirls" (Friel, 1990: 2); and Gerry's, his absent father's, two visits during that summer, before leaving for Spain to join the Republican side in the Civil War. As if highlighted by these four circumstances, the claustrophobic Catholic narrow-mindedness of rural Ireland gradually comes to the surface and eventually leads to the play's sorrowful, even tragic ending —Kate is dismissed from her schoolteaching post because of Uncle Jack's abandonment of Catholic belief and ritual; Rose is betrayed by the false promises of a local man; she and Agnes lose their hand-

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including Sebastian Barry, Samuel Beckett, Brendan Behan, Dion Boucicault, Brian Friel, Lady Gregory, Frank McGuinness, Tom Murphy, Sean O'Casey, Bernard Shaw, J.M. Synge and W.B. Yeats.

[2] Indices of the success of the stage version of *Dancing at Lughnasa* are not far to find. The play's first landmark stage production had its world première at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin on April 24, 1990, it transferred to the National Theatre in London in October 1990, and subsequently to Broadway, in all three cases meeting with widespread critical and public acclaim. It won three Tony Awards in Broadway for Best Play, Best Director (Patrick Mason) and Best Supporting Actress (Bríd Brennan as Agnes), and the Laurence Olivier and Evening Standard Awards for Best Play in London. Reviews of the Abbey run were almost uniformly laudatory (Armitstead, 1990; Coveney, 1990; Finegan, 1990; Harding, 1990; Hassett, 1990; Houlihan, 1990; Mamone, 1990; Nowlan, 1990; O'Donnell, 1990); *Variety* recorded that theatregoers were "vociferous ... in support of Brian Friel's new play" (Anon., 1990); and the play remains third on *The Irish Times*'s list of the top 10 Irish plays chosen by readers, after such undisputed classics as Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* (1924) and J.M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907). The film *Dancing at Lughnasa* does not even figure on the list of the top 10 Irish films on the same website (<www.ireland.com>). In addition, it registers the lowest takings for a Meryl Streep film at $2,202,000, a far cry from the $106,300,000 for *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979), the $87,100,000 for *Out of Africa* (1985), and even the $27,920,909 average gross of Streep movies in the 1990s (<www.the-movie-times.com>).

knitting job when a new factory opens ("The Industrial Revolution had finally caught up with Ballybeg" [Friel, 1990: 59]), emigrate to London and die there, destitute, years later; Chris is definitively abandoned by Michael's father and is kept ignorant, by the older Michael himself, that all along his father had his own family, a wife and three children, in Wales (Friel, 1990: 61); Michael eventually emigrates, "happy to escape" (Friel, 1990: 71), as he says, from the confines of Ballybeg.

Ostensibly, then, the play is a critique of the pastoral trope, revealing as it does the mean realities of rural Ireland. It may even be argued that the non-naturalistic narrative frame enables such a critique by functioning as a powerful distancing device. Prapassaree Kramer (2000) takes one step further when he claims, in a recent essay, that by never allowing Michael to cross the boundary between his role as narrator and his role as character in the action, Friel aims to problematise his status as a reliable 'recorder' of the past. The narrator himself, according to Kramer, is demystified in the play as his dubious motives for reconstructing the past come to the surface —guilt over his abandonment of his family and anxiety over his illegitimacy (Kramer, 2000: 174). In short, "Friel offers us the spectacle of Michael presenting his memories of 1936 not as a design to bathe the little town of Ballybeg in a glow of nostalgia but to highlight the process ... by which memory, fallible but creative, serves both to haunt and to fortify the fragile ego" (Kramer, 2000: 179). Persuasive as Kramer's contention is, I want to suggest, firstly, that the playtext is far more deeply fissured between a critique of both the rural trope and the process of "remembering it", and the casting of a "glow of nostalgia" over the whole thing, than he is prepared to admit. Secondly and relatedly, I will consider the question as to why the highly successful and influential Abbey production of the play palpably opted for such a "nostalgic inflection" —a question that will take us outside the text itself, back to history and culture, a dimension that Kramer's purely textual approach fails to take into consideration.

Michael's closing narrative may be seen as the clearest piece of textual evidence that, as Grene has argued of an earlier Friel play, *Philadelphia Here I Come!* (1964), "What [Michael] here describes is being enacted for a theatre audience; Ballybeg, the claustrophobically lifeless and loveless small town, is in the process of being re-written as idyll" (1999: 204-205).[3] In other words, the critique is being transformed into a mood, nostalgia, and into a myth, that of Ireland as the pre-modern pastoral other:

> *As Michael begins to speak the stage is lit in a very soft, golden light so that the tableau we see is almost, but not quite, in a haze ...*
>
> And so, when I cast my mind back to that summer of 1936, different kinds of memories offer themselves to me.
>
> But there is one memory of that Lughnasa time that visits me most often; and what fascinates me about that memory is that it owes nothing to fact. In that memory atmosphere is more real than incident and everything is simultaneously actual and illusory. In that memory, too, the air is nostalgic with the music

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[3] Much as Uncle Jack's Uganda is idealised in the playtext as a symbol for wild pagan energy and sensual release.

> of the thirties. It drifts in from somewhere far away —a mirage of sound— a dream music that is both heard and imagined; that seems to be both itself and its own echo; a sound so alluring and so mesmeric that the afternoon is bewitched, maybe haunted, by it. And what is so strange about that memory is that everybody seems to be floating on those sweet sounds, moving rhythmically, languorously, in complete isolation; responding more to the mood of the music than to its beat. When I remember it, I think of it as dancing. Dancing with the eyes half closed because to open them would break the spell. Dancing as if language had surrendered to movement —as if this ritual, this wordless ceremony, was now the way to speak, to whisper private and sacred things, to be in touch with some otherness .... (Friel, 1990: 70-71)

Reviews of the Abbey production of the play reveal that at its root there must undoubtedly have lain the strand in the text that emphasises nostalgia and myth-making. Several commentators, significantly including Michael Etherton's note in the Abbey programme (Etherton, 1990), point out that the play's action is relatively slight and what matters —what the Abbey production brought to the fore— is the mood, the atmosphere, recurrently described as pervaded by nostalgia (Armitstead, 1990; Coveney, 1990; O'Donnell, 1990; Pine, 1990). It is through the lens of nostalgia, reviewers suggest, that the play directs us towards "a singularly beautiful poetic vision" (O'Donnell, 1990) of "Lives lost in history [that] have been given substance in art" (Coveney, 1990). In the process of transforming the harsh reality of mid-1930s Irish rural life into a nostalgic pastoral idyll and fixing it as art, the landmark Abbey production of the play provided the "decent mirror to see ourselves in" (Friel, 1990: 2) that Chris longs for at the start of the action —a mirror casting a nostalgic image of rural Ireland and of Ireland as rural that audiences in the early 1990s, both at home and abroad, found truly spellbinding.[4]

Arguably, the Abbey production's marked inflection of the play towards nostalgia is intimately connected to its outstanding national and international success. In "Back Projections: John Hinde and the New Nostalgia", Luke Gibbons suggests that the historical recurrence of emigration shaped the experience of nostalgia in a late developing economy such as Ireland's in the second half of the 20th century: "The severance from the past which once characterized the emigrant's experience becomes a general cultural condition in a modernizing society ... The difficulty with nostalgia in these circumstances is not that it turns back on the modern, but that it is part of it, if by that we mean a particular view of social change which embalms rather than actively renegotiates the past" (Gibbons, 1996: 43). The Abbey's 1990 production of *Dancing at Lughnasa* caught Irish audiences at an uneasy moment, when the strains of rapid modernisation were making themselves intensely felt in Ireland. The glow of nostalgia it cast over rural Ireland in the mid-1930s —a time which the play depicts as itself uneasily caught between the conflicting claims of tradition and modernity, on the threshold of a belated Industrial Revolution —seems to have functioned in the way Gibbons suggests. It contributed to fixing the past for Irish metropolitan audiences rather than opening it up for critical analysis. If, as poststructuralism claims, the other is always implicated in the construction of the self, then in Ireland the nostalgic rural idyll may be seen as providing urban audiences with a sense that in the face of rapid modernisation and industrialisation, such idealised yet reassuring otherness will continue to anchor the nation's sense of identity.[5] As regards the global economy, the stage version of *Dancing at Lughnasa* may be claimed to have operated in a related way as an icon of otherness for British and American metropolitan audiences, reinforcing the discursive construction of Ireland as the site of the pre-modern, as a pastoral locus of origin. Jean-François Lyotard (1984: 81) has claimed that the "postmodern condition" is characterised by the absence of nostalgia for a lost, idealised past, but the enthusiastic reception accorded to the Abbey production of *Dancing at Lughnasa* in both Britain and the United States possibly foregrounds a central paradox of postmodernity and globalisation —namely, that the dismissal of nostalgia is unavoidably coupled with its other, i.e. a longing for origins, a desire for 'more authentic' modes of life. By ultimately upholding the trope of rural Ireland as modernity's other, the 1990 staging of *Dancing at Lughnasa* catered to such a desire.[6]

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[4] One Irish reviewer was particularly candid in this respect: "I had better declare my interest; I belong to the same generation as Mr. Friel—and am just as much in love with the nineteen-thirties. It all came flooding back last night ..." (Houlihan, 1990). The production's treatment of the five sisters' 'explosion' into dance is revealing in this connection. While the playtext, in my view, is ambivalently torn between presenting it as a moment of liberation when the Lughnasa spirit seeps into the Mundy household, and stressing its parodic, grotesque nature (Friel, 1990: 21-22), the Abbey production chose the former track, thus bringing the dance scene into line with Michael's nostalgic closing narrative. Several reviewers record the dance scene as a bewitching moment in terms of audience response (Anon., 1990; Coveney, 1990; Finegan, 1990; Harding, 1990).

III.

So did, ostensibly, the 1998 film version of the play. In addition to the strong performances by a cast led by Meryl Streep (Kate) and Michael Gambon (Uncle Jack), reviewers repeatedly praised its accomplished evocation of a feeling of time and place through accent work, costuming, charming landscapes endowed with a melancholic golden hue, and the pervasive presence of traditional Irish music (Armstrong, 1998; Blue Velvet, 1999; Fung, 1998; McCarthy, 1998; O'Brien, 1998; Weitzman, 1998). In other words, all the necessaries seemed to be there for yet another successful bathing in nostalgia, rooted in the discursive construction of Ireland as the pastoral other. As one reviewer significantly argued, "Given the work's cultural pedigree, fine cast led by Meryl Streep and *even the current vogue for things Irish*, Sony Classics should be able to position this as a solid class offering in the US, where it opens exclusively in New York and Los Angeles in November, followed by wide specialized release at Christmas" (McCarthy, 1998; emphasis added). However, the film was found to be "less than the sum of its parts" (Armstrong, 1998). I would suggest that its diminished emotional impact on metropolitan audiences, as registered by several commentators in an implicit or explicit comparison with the Abbey production (Baumgarten, 1999; Blue Velvet, 1998; Ebert, 1998; Fung, 1998; Gleiberman, 1998; McCarthy, 1998; O'Brien, 1998; Walker, 1998; Weitzman, 1998), is a consequence of the fact that it does not match its nostalgia-inducing surface with a similarly inflected structure and thematic development.

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[5] One further aspect of Gibbons's discussion of the Irish experience of nostalgia via John Hinde's postcards is highly pertinent to Michael's role as narrator and his non-naturalistic physical absence from the main action in *Dancing at Lughnasa.* After defining nostalgia as "the painful desire to restore the sense of belonging that is associated with childhood, and the emotional resonance of the maternal" (1996: 39), Gibbons codes it as a male phenomenon by referring to "Freud's observation on the male desire to recapture an imaginary self-sufficiency associated with nature, childhood and the maternal" (1996: 40). This leads him to conclude: "The relative lack of males in prominent positions [in John Hinde's postcards] suggests not so much their absence as their presence *behind* the camera, irrevocably cut off from the field of vision ... the camera is invariably equated with a male point of view ...." (1996: 41). Ellen G. Friedman (1997) also genders nostalgia as masculine.

[6] In an illuminating comparison between two memoirs of Irish childhood, Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* (1992), a novel that relentlessly deconstructs the fundamental tenets of the Irish national self-image, and Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* (1996), a tale of achievement against all odds, Rosa González (2000) relates the former's lukewarm reception as opposed to the latter's enormous popularity to the resistance of international audiences to any representation of Ireland that challenges its stereotypical image as a pastoral, pre-modern other.

The film goes a long way towards 'opening up' the play. While in the play the action is confined to the Mundy's kitchen and garden, the film wanders much farther afield. Among many other episodes, the camera shows Gerry going on several excursions on his motorbike; Kate cycling into Ballybeg, where she hears about the new factory, visits Austin Morgan's shop and coyly flirts with the owner, and is dismissed from her teaching job by the priest; the harvest and the cutting of turf; Rose and her local man, Danny Bradley —who is only talked about in the playtext— having a picnic on a boat on Lough Anna; the Lughnasa festival in the hills; Uncle Jack 'rescuing' Rose from a drunken Danny Bradley. Such an 'opening up' was found to distract from the nostalgic mood by making it all 'too real', or as one reviewer put it: "Why did *Dancing at Lughnasa* affect me so much more deeply on the stage than it does on film? Was it the physical presence of the actors? No, I think just the opposite: it was their distance. Up there on the stage, they took on allegorical dimensions, while in the close-ups of film, they are too present, too close, too specific" (Ebert, 1998). In particular, the film significantly departs from the playtext in its dramatisation of the Lughnasa celebrations. While Rose's account in the playtext is tinged with longing and melancholy —"[Danny Bradley] showed me what was left of the Lughnasa fires ... It's a very peaceful place up there. There was nobody there but Danny and me ... Then he walked me down as far as the workhouse gate and I came on home by myself" (Friel, 1990: 59)— the film shows the festival at its pitch: the rowdy dancing, drinking and fire-jumping, Uncle Jack's wandering into the crowd and eventually taking a scared Rose back home, just as previously it has revealed Danny Bradley's callousness by showing him rocking the boat on Lough Anna until a frightened Rose promises to go to the Lughnasa dance with him. Like the rest of the attempts at 'opening up' the playtext, this diminishes instead of enhancing the nostalgic construction of Ireland as the pastoral other.

Crucially, the film all but suppresses the framing narrative and completely does away with the non-naturalistic device of having the older Michael, the narrator, speak the lines of his seven-year-old self. The film's voiceover narrator —Gerard McSorley, who played the adult Michael in the Abbey production— delivers a shortened variation on the playtext's opening narrative, culminating in "Little did I know it, child as I was, that this was the beginning of things changing, changing so quickly, too quickly", as opposed to the playtext's "And even though I was only a child of seven at the time I know I had a sense of unease ... of things changing too quickly before my eyes, of becoming what they ought not to be" (Friel, 1990: 2), which arguably conjures up a sense of loss and nostalgia much more effectively. When the film's voiceover narrator reappears at the very end with a drastically cut, reshuffled version of his last two speeches in the playtext (Friel, 1990: 59-61; 70-71), he clearly lacks the power to re-write the action as nostalgic pastoral idyll —despite the fact that the sisters' exultant dance is moved to the end in an attempt to underline the link between it and Michael's "When I remember it, I think of it as dancing ... Dancing as if language had surrendered to movement".

In the film, finally, it is Maggie who asks for a "decent mirror to see ourselves in" so as to smarten herself up when she hears Gerry approaching on his motorbike. The metaphorical, self-reflexive resonance of the phrase is lost, thus signalling the film's 'failure' to nourish the nostalgia of global metropolitan audiences by unproblematically confirming the construction of Ireland as modernity's pastoral other.[7]

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[7] Thanks to Maraid Delaney, archivist at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, and to Jacqueline Hurtley of the University of Barcelona, for their help in locating and obtaining some of the reviews mentioned in this article. This is a greatly enlarged, revised version of a paper first presented at the II International Conference on Postcolonial Studies: Globalisation and Nationalisms, University of Vigo (Spain), 24-26 October 2001.

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*International Journal
of
English Studies*

IJES

UNIVERSITY OF MURCIA

www.um.es/engphil/ijes

Returning the Gaze: Culture and the Politics of Surveillance in Ireland

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ABSTRACT

This essay seeks to examine the modalities of colonial state surveillance as well as several ways in which they have been problematised in recent Irish literary writing, film, painting, photography and practice. Works by Ciaran Carson, Willie Doherty, Dave Fox, Terry George and Jim Sheridan, and Dermot Seymour are all therefore examined with the thematic of "returning the gaze" in mind. Further, this essay seeks to advance contemporary theories of surveillance away from an information-based or textual model to one which considers the spatial violence of surveillance and the subject positions it delimits, particularly in the context of colonialism and postcolonial theory.

KEYWORDS: Surveillance, Irish Cultural Studies, postcolonial studies, Irish film, photography, Ciaran Carson, space.

Colonial state surveillance has an extensive history in Ireland, from Martello Towers to spy networks, photographs of Fenians, and paid informers. Surveillance has been, if not essential, at least integral to the maintenance of the power of the colonial state apparatus. In the last three decades, the state in Northern Ireland has used a particularly advanced, modern system of

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IJES, vol. 2 (2), 2002, pp. 95-107

surveillance. This system had been —and still is to a large extent— composed of several interlocking elements: the physical presence of the military and paramilitary police force on the streets, several RUC photographic units taking about 2,500 prints per week, 19 purpose-built permanent vehicle checkpoints (PVCPs) and 13 purpose-built surveillance towers on hilltops in south Armagh, of which all have been serviced by helicopters. Perhaps the most advanced element, however, of this surveillance system is continuous RAF helicopter surveillance, made possible by the invention in the 1970's of reliable telescopic camera and viewing equipment (the Ferranti AF 532 stabilised magnifying observation aid is one example), with the addition in the 1980's of infra-red, night-vision, and thermal imager scopes and effective long-range listening devices. While the level of helicopter surveillance in Northern Ireland is only a degree or two more intensive than, say, south central Los Angeles, it is that degree or two extra that is exceptional —possibly unique— for a putative modern state. Such extraordinarily intensive surveillance is one of the aspects of the North that makes it possible to understand it as a colonial situation.

The object of this essay is to address the socio-psychological ramifications of such intensive surveillance, to identify just what kind of subject positions it enforces, and to examine the manner in which artists and activists have successfully resisted it in poetry, film, photography, painting, and practice. First, however, the essay offers a brief theorization of optical and photographic surveillance in general, challenging common assumptions that surveillance is primarily about information gathering rather than the production of forms of spatiality. For returning the gaze does not involve merely contesting gathered information, but re-constituting colonized space itself, and in the process re-figuring subjectivity in colonial conditions.

It is my premise that surveillance in general is less about information, as most theorists would claim, and more about the material display of force —less about taking notes than spatializing the force monopolized by the state. The most influential theorization of surveillance for cultural studies scholars is that of Michel Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish* (1977). It is clear, however, that something has changed between the older forms of surveillance that Foucault critiques —the model of surveillance, for him, being the Panopticon that Bentham sketched out— and contemporary surveillance. For one, these modes of surveillance are material forces of social control, not sketches and not plans or theories to be generalized later, hypothetically, into all possible social institutions. They are not, in other words, Bentham's unbuilt architecture. Secondly, what once was to be applied in prisons, insane asylums, or schools, is being applied to society in general, out 'in the open', in public space. And third, expensive technologies and procedures of instruction (backed by the accumulated resources only available to the state) are necessitated by these new modes of surveillance (most exemplified by helicopter surveillance). These developments, I think, transform the concept of surveillance itself. We can no longer think of it as an activity in which anybody off the street can participate, for example, as a sort of self-sustaining auto-mechanistic practice. Foucault's observation about the ultimate surveillance "machine", the Panopticon, no longer holds: "Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine: in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitors, even his servants" (Foucault, 1977: 202). Today the servants would be powerless to operate (or to turn off) the machine of surveillance or —in the case of helicopter surveillance— powerless even to access the equipment.

With the advent of photographic, and specifically filmic modes of surveillance the concept of surveillance within critical discourses needs to be retrofitted. One reason why is that surveillance has always been for its theorists a problem of information: it involves the recording and processing of information about (national, colonial, etc.) subjects as a way of locating and fixing individuals by means of a vast structure of data. The central point about surveillance in the plague town for Foucault is that it is based "on a system of permanent registration: reports from the syndics to the intendants, from the intendants to the magistrates or mayor" (196). At the heart of this logic of surveillance is an "uninterrupted work of writing" (197). It is a body of information, written down in "reports", which enables the "capillary functioning of power". This description of the relations between power, information, and surveillance is still of course useful to critiques of the state. The North of Ireland is a site of constant and pervasive processing of information by the colonial state. For example, soldiers flying aerial surveillance for the RAF in Belfast have boasted publically that not only do they have the license plate numbers of every car moving in and out of the city in their on-board computers, but that they know the color of every sofa in every living room in the city. (Whether this is true, or even possible is of course another question.) This is indeed an advanced example of the kind of information-based model of surveillance Foucault rightly foregrounds. The advancement of computer technology, as some critics have noted, represents a sort of technological amplification of the structures states or imperial powers employed to control and reproduce subjects. This, to some theorists, represents simply an intensification of surveillance. And ways of describing and critiquing it must therefore match this exponential expansion. Computers, by this logic, simply enhance the same, classic structures of information behind surveillance. The computer and the technologies accompanying it, like closed circuit television (CCTV), are simply conceived of as more sophisticated procedures of writing, recording, of registration. In sum, the practice of surveillance has always been theorized as a sort of locator service which produces and secures subjects by keeping track of them in textual forms. New technologies simply ramify and reproduce on a massive scale old modalities of surveillance.

Canadian sociologist David Lyon, in his work, *The Electronic Eye: The Rise of Surveillance Society* (1994) provides the most detailed examination of the various concepts of surveillance applied to map out the shift that has occurred with the introduction of new technology. Lyon begins by discussing the two dominant "metaphors", as he calls them, within theories of surveillance: Orwell's "ubiquitous two-way television screen" of *Nineteen Eighty-four* and Bentham's Panopticon (Lyon, 1994: 58). Both seem to have distinct limits as descriptive metaphors for Lyon because neither really treats of the complexities of modern surveillance technology. They are, for Lyon, staple visions of surveillance for its theorists but are outmoded. Administrative power has been "enlarged and enhanced by computers, especially since the 1960's," he says,

> Yet surely we see here nothing less than the near-perfection of the principle of discipline by invisible inspection via information-gathering. Or do we? Today no shortage exists of social analysts prepared to complete Foucault by making the connections explicit.... [M]ay we think of electronic surveillance as panoptic power? (Lyon, 1994: 67).

Lyon suggests that modern electronic surveillance is not immediately recoverable to the concept of panopticism or to Orwellian dystopian visions of it. The Canada Lyon cites, a country of twenty-six million where a central government operates 2,200 databases containing an average of twenty files on each citizen is simply not adequately described within the framework of Orwellian or Foucaultian models (82). This enormous structure of data is not merely an "electronic Panopticon". And it surely is not near-perfect or total. Lyon cites various means subjects employ to evade such information-gathering surveillance: false identity cards, deliberately distorted information, computer hacking and cyber-theft, etc., available of course to different classes at different historical moments. Lyon cites theorists Bauman, Shearing and Stenning who see the dominant force of social control as ordered consumption such as occurs at Disney World.

> Less like Orwell's nightmare, much more like Huxley's Brave New World, here [at Disney World] is consensually-based control in which "people are seduced into conformity by the pleasures offered by the drug 'soma' rather than coerced into compliance by threat of Big Brother, just as people are today seduced to conform by pleasures of consuming the goods that corporate power has to offer." (75).

This is a Gramscian model, where consent is necessary to secure hegemony. Gramsci does not accept the notion, like Orwell's position does, that power is ever total. Even in the tight structure of corporate and state control implied by 2,200 databases and countless files and mailing lists, resistance and the autonomous initiatives of the subaltern classes exist. In other words, surveillance is clearly crossed, undermined, and conflicted as a dominant practice of social control, always encountered in a dialectical set of relations. In short, it is more complex and less total than it purports to be and as it tries to portray itself. Yet the main assumption about surveillance that underlies Lyon's conclusions as well as the those of the social theorists he cites is that it is primarily a system of information-gathering, that the heart of the matter is information collection and maintenance alone. In the various descriptions Lyon outlines, however, structures of information and systems of surveillance are collapsed into each other. The collection of information comes to appear identical to surveillance, and vice versa.

Lyon and others, then, have taken the "optic" out of panopticism. The only way for Lyon to recover even in part the concept of panopticism is as a metaphor for a network of data. Yet such a reduction is troubled, if not made impossible, within the analysis of new technologies of surveillance —particularly that of the camera. It is not possible to analytically collapse "information" with the "camera", because the camera does not function primarily as an information gathering tool, especially in the context of colonialism and the delimitation of subject positions under it. The camera or the range of other technologies of gazing function only secondarily as a way to collect and process information. Camera tapes, in fact, often re-cycle, filming only every few hours or so before they rewind and begin taping over themselves. They do not get filed in a vast state video library in which years of footage of everyday street life is dutifully stored and diligently examined in endless offices filled with state bureaucrats. Cameras represent something rather different than computer databases. Visual inspection simply does not constitute primarily a form of information-gathering. It constitutes a form of spatial violence.

The temporality of information gathering, the "work of writing", the reporting along (through, via) lines of communication, in other words the concepts of time produced by police log entries or computer databases for example, tend to be denecessitated by the security camera or the helicopter. What comes to be important is not a logic of linear temporality —i.e. lines of reporting, lines of writing, capillaries of power— but the production of a particular spatiality. This can be understood roughly as 'policed' spatiality, a form of space that also intersects dramatically and forcefully with the delimitation of subject positions. Individuals are fixed into particular subject positions by virtue not of a linear, temporal logic of accumulated information, but by virtue of surveillance organized around the idea of the secure area. It is not the accumulation of information that fixes the subject, but the space itself.

This sort of fixity is the same as that imposed by imperial states in other colonies, as several postcolonial theorists have explained. The gaze of the camera functions as a kind of permanently fixed (and fixing) "gaze of the colonizer", as Homi Bhabha articulates it. Bhabha rejects the subjective fixity Foucault insists upon for the more liberating idea of a colonial subject who is multiply divided into fixity and fantasy. Bhabha's colonizer's gaze is met not with a stable, controlled colonized subject, but with mimicry. Identity vacillates, and the colonial relation of power is destablized: "[It is] a process by which the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed and the 'partial' representation rearticulates the whole notion of identity and alienates it from essence" (Bhabha, 1990: 129). In Bhabha's understanding of surveillance, the gaze does not attempt to produce subjectivity by way of information gathering. The gaze is something distinct. It attempts to impose subject positions by fiat. Most importantly in Bhabha, the gaze fails because it is returned —the watcher becomes the watched.

I want to salvage the assumptions Bhabha makes about the colonial gaze, the seeming non-textual, non-discursive, and non-informational aspect of it. In the 'secured' space of Belfast or Derry, it is clear that one cannot mimic a security camera, or resort to 'fantasy' to respond to a helicopter hovering over one's neighborhood; one cannot exactly film the filmer, so to speak, because the barrier of a new technology does not allow that, i.e. the subject cannot gain the same kind of access to the material modes of surveillance that the state can. But one can return the gaze by other means, which I will explain in detail below.

The poet Ciaran Carson's writings that deal with surveillance are well known. The prose piece, "Intelligence", in *Belfast Confetti*, is perhaps his most engaged treatment of the subject. The text opens, as David Lloyd has said, "with the vista of night-time surveillance, apprehended not from the perspective of the operator but from that of the grounded denizen of the city" (Lloyd, 1999: 50). It reads:

> We are all being watched through peep-holes, one-way mirrors, security cameras, talked about on walkie-talkies, car 'phones, Pye Pocketphones; and as this helicopter chainsaws overhead, I pull back the curtains down here on the terraces to watch its pencil-beam of light flick through the card index —*I see the moon and the moon sees me.* (Carson, 1989: 78)

Surveillance, for Carson, is a continual presence —as continual as the moon. Carson maps clearly a form of subjectivity that surveillance imposes and enforces. As Lloyd has pointed out, however, it is mitigated by spaces apart, by locations outside inspection, the "lo-tech tactics of response" (Lloyd, 1999:50). "... [T]he technological glitz [of the military hardware Carson fetishizes] remains susceptible to the interference of the location in which it is deployed..." (50). However susceptible Carson represents it as being, however, he casts into bold relief the psychological impact of being continuously observed. In a more recent poem Carson returns to the problem of the surveyed subject in a poem, entitled, *Cave Quid Dicis, Quando, et Cui* (meaning, 'beware what you say, when, and to whom'). It reads:

> You will recognize them by their Polaroids that make the span between their eyes
> Immeasurable. Beware their digital watches; they are bugged with microscopic batteries.
>
> Make sure you know your left from your right and which side of the road you walk on.
> If one stops beside you and invites you in, do not enter the pantechnicon.
>
> ... Watch it if they write in screeds,
>
> For everything you say is never lost, but hangs on in the starry void
> In ghosted thumb-whorl galaxies. Your fingerprints are everywhere. *Be paranoid.*
> (Carson, 1993: 46).

Carson's poem, full of imperatives, advises —as if to somebody new to the area— to be the right kind of subject, to watch what you say, to watch where you walk, to refuse entry to the "pantechnicon" (Carson's word for a space more complicated, and more controlled, than the old-fashioned panopticon). The poem almost seems to be the ramblings of somebody who has escaped a totalizing state, and is advising, between breaths, to somebody about to enter it how to behave. Here we have the very figure of the subject under surveillance, warning, finally: "*Be paranoid.*"

Paranoia is, of course, the inevitable result of living with intensive state surveillance. The

Derry photographer Willie Doherty, in several of his photographic pieces, including the haze-shrouded "Last Hours of Daylight", explores the perspective of paranoia brought upon by surveillance. In pieces like "Undercover", he portrays a quotidian path down by the River Foyle, but across it he has printed the words, "Undercover" in order to undermine the complacency usually reserved for viewing landscape representations. He infuses into the work a sense of distrust, a paranoid anxiety about being watched —even in as mundane settings this. As Jean Fisher has explained of this piece, "seeing here conjures up paranoid sense of blindness and vulnerability, of being seen without seeing" (Fisher, 1990: 8). Perhaps Doherty himself best speaks for his work. Filmmaker Dave Fox's 1992 documentary film, *Picturing Derry,* sabotages accepted assumptions about the visual. In it, Doherty, who is interviewed about his photos in the exhibition *Unknown Depths* (1990) explains:

> I think, just as important in these photographs is what is not shown, as what I show. Because often the things that you can't see, here, are the things that impinge most on your life, like the idea that you are being watched, or the idea that surveillance happens daily. You can't photograph those things because you can only photograph something that physically is in front of you, but you can suggest those things as a psychological state.

Referring to "Undercover" he says:

> So on the one hand you have this very romantic idea of a walk along a river, but that's underlaid by a layer of undercover activity that you're never quite sure about but you suspect is there.

He continues:

> The photographs themselves often don't have anything happening in them. There aren't any people. So they could, in a sense, be one frame from thousands of surveillance photographs. Surveillance is a condition, it happens all the time, and it's continually there. It's like the Northern weather. It's constantly gray here during the winter, and there isn't a break from it. It's only afterwards that you realize that it was an oppressive situation that you were in. I think of these photographs as being primarily for people who live in Derry; living in this place I have to deal with it in some way. So I think of these works as my first act of resistance. (Fox, 1992)

In the film, Fox interviews one local amateur photographer, Julie Doherty, who describes a time when somebody asked her why she did not photograph scenery rather than material "heavy", as she calls it, with politics. She explains to the questioner, "Well, if we go out and take photographs of scenery, if we go out and take a photograph of trees and bushes and lovely green fields, we don't know what's behind the trees and bushes ... That's reality for us. That's what scenery means to us. You don't know who's behind a bush or a tree" (Fox, 1992). Surveillance makes even the landscape suspect to the subject who is constantly watched. This is because surveillance relies precisely upon concealment and suspicion to achieve its effects.

One of the leading theorists of contemporary surveillance, William Bogard, in his work *The Simulation of Surveillance: Hypercontrol in Telematic Societies* (1996) has explained surveillance as being intimately linked with simulation. That is, the simulation of watching

—making subjects believe that they are being watched, even if they are not— is integral to its functioning. Bogard explains:

> As a support of surveillance, simulation produces those disorienting effects of the oscillation of presence and absence —i.e. uncertainty regarding its locus, its modes of operation, its intent, and so forth— which are the source of its [surveillance's] power.... It is the play of these conditions ... that defines the paradoxical space-time of surveillance, its command of location and duration, as it were, from the 'outside', out of view, while nevertheless remaining a kind of 'presence'. Surveillance is always linked in complex ways to those forms of ruse and deception which, in supporting the exercise of power, present power to be something else, elsewhere, not what it seems. (Bogard, 1996: 79)

The slow-motion, still-frame effect of Doherty's photographs captures the 'space-time' of surveillance exactly, heightening a sense of presence precisely by representing absence, drawing attention to the "play of these conditions", demonstrating the logic of surveillance Bogard outlines. By doing so, Doherty is returning the gaze in a specific way. He is holding a moment out of the space-time of surveillance, like pausing upon a frame in a reel of frames. Bogard elaborates on the returning of the gaze in a way that advances Bhabha. He describes "*the gaze that returns the gaze*, like a *stare* that syphons off the power of the other's stare by repeating or doubling it, and thus becomes, discreetly, covertly, something more than a gaze (the best way to neutralize the observer is to look back with the same, or even greater, intensity). In that return of the gaze, a 'moment out of time' is created, where differences of power are canceled in the virtual space of endless repetition." (Bogard, 1996: 81) By pausing, by suggesting presence by representing absence, Doherty forcefully cancels out —short-circuits— the power of photographic surveillance.

To clarify here for a moment: surveillance, as we know from Foucault, happens in time, as mentioned above. It has a duration, as information is collected and compiled within its unique, self-contained temporality. (More familiarly, for example, films have their own 'time' —we see the entire Russian revolution in Eisenstein's hour and a half, or the lifetime of a gangster in Coppola's two hours; surveillance has its own time, necessitates its own temporality.) But it also produces space, the space in which the subject strolls within, along the walls of Derry, for example. In filmic modes of surveillance both time and space are combined, creating what Bogard calls the "paradoxical space-time" of surveillance. It is paradoxical because the two things appear to be produced at the same juncture: duration and location, or, in the terms of my argument, information and spatiality intersect, both producing their respective effects. For my analysis, what matters is the form of subjectivity that emerges at this juncture. Fixed and recorded, placed in space, noted in time, the subject experiences what Doherty terms the "psychological state" of being watched, or thinking that one is being watched.

Ciaran Carson, Doherty, and Fox approach the problem of surveillance from the discourses of poetry, photography, and documentary filmmaking —and all of them approach it from the point of view of the subject of surveillance— from the ground up, so to speak. Of the three, however, none have effectively represented the structural *relation* produced by surveillance between the gazer and the gazed upon, though Doherty's astute dualism does gesture towards that.

It is my argument that surveillance forces the *externalization* of the subject, who becomes continually aware of its presence. Inner life is pushed aside and in its place an external fascination is inserted. Intimacy is made susceptible to externalization, to a kind of *ex*timacy. Jim Sheridan and Terry George, in the 1997 film, *The Boxer*, represent such a process of externalization in action. And unlike other oppositional art forms that have approached the issue from the point of view of the subject, Sheridan and George successfully demystify the relation between the air and the ground, the camera and the space, the watcher and the watched. The film is set in Belfast during the time of the 1994 IRA cease-fire. It has, however, no fewer than 12 separate helicopter surveillance scenes interspersed throughout it, and the chopping sounds of military helicopter rotors echo through the soundtrack. Sheridan and George create an effective illusion that everything that is happening in the film is somehow being watched by the state.

To contextualise this briefly, helicopter surveillance has been a feature of life in the North of Ireland for almost half a century. We know, in fact, that the RUC and British Army used helicopters in the pursuit of IRA volunteers as early as 1956, only a few years after helicopters were introduced for widespread use in the military. Bernadette McAliskey, for example, recalls in her *The Price of My Soul* (1969) a raid in which IRA volunteers, including her father, fled into the "Black Bog" outside of Cookstown to evade capture. "[T]he authorities put search lights on it by night and sent helicopters over it by day, [but] the Black Bog never gave up an IRA man." (Devlin, 1969: 40-41) Again, as in Carson, the "interference of the location in which it is deployed" makes technology impotent, despite its glitz and powerful appearance (the appearance of helicopters in 1956 rural Ireland would indeed be a spectacle of state fiat[1]). Of course, the military and police in the North did not initiate the extensive use of helicopters for regular aerial surveillance until the early 1970's. As the British military historian Colonel Micheal Dewar has outlined in *The British Army in Northern Ireland* (1996), "In the early 1970's, the Army was equipped with Sioux and Scout helicopters" (Dewar, 1996: 4). The Sioux was an American designed machine used primarily for reconnaissance, observation and liaison duties. It was replaced in the late 1970s with the Gazelle, many of which are still used to this day for aerial surveillance. Helicopters were used intensively in south Armagh, especially to re-supply the Crossmaglen army base, which was only servicable by air. And they served a crucial function in the re-supply of other bases, otherwise isolated. They were used in so-called

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[1] For perspective on the novelty that such a sight would represent in rural Ireland, it should be remembered that it wasn't until 1956, for example, that the Bell XH-40 *Huey* helicopter, well known for its presence as a work-horse in the American imperialist war in Vietnam, was invented. The Korean War and British operations in Cyprus and Malaya represented the first use of helicopters for counter-insurgency operations, and we had to wait until 1964 before the first helicopter would land on a skyscraper helipad in New York. Helicopters were a relative novelty almost everywhere until the early 1960s.

"Eagle" operations in which a helicopter would approach a car in rural terrain and drop soldiers off who would subsequently set up a "surprise" road-block, harassing suspects and civilians alike (Dewar, 1996: 24). They were also used, as they are in all combat situations, for the evacuation of wounded soldiers from theatres of operation (in fact, the helicopter was pioneered for just such a purpose in Korea and elsewhere). In general, however, as technology improved through the late 1970's and early 1980's the use of helicopter surveillance in the North of Ireland increased at an exponential rate. In the 1990s, surveillance became a daily experience for most urbanites in the North, something to be deliberately ignored by colonized populations or applauded by Unionists and Loyalists. It was effectively normalized, becoming as much a part of life as walking the dog or taking a stroll. It was often a shock, for example, to outsiders who arrived in Belfast or Derry to see helicopters hovering in the sky continuously while most people who live there hardly noticed them at all.

The normality of helicopter surveillance is exactly what Terry George and Jim Sheridan represent. Helicopters are continuous, involving themselves in nearly every intimate moment. The first helicopter surveillance scene in *The Boxer* is early in the film. Provocatively, the film begins with a wedding —a woman marrying an IRA prisoner in Long Kesh. As she returns to the pub where her wedding celebration will take place, with her family and friends around her, a helicopter hovers over her. Sheridan carefully sequenced the shots so that the first shot is taken from a military helicopter, looking down on the excitement. The very next shot is of Maggie, a main character, and the bride *looking up* at the helicopter, returning the gaze quickly, as they rush inside away from its prying cameras. The relation between the watched and the watcher is dramatized in the shot sequence —we move from seeing to being seen, from intruding to being intruded upon. The next time we see a helicopter is when Danny Quinn, the film's main character, approaches his neighborhood from the Loyalist side of a 'peace line'; he walks up to the gate, and finds it locked; he realizes, in this one attempt to open the gate, that the places familiar to him from 14 years ago, before he was imprisoned, are changed utterly, partitioned. Exactly at this moment he looks up, and returns the gaze of a hovering helicopter; and again, Sheridan takes us immediately to the cockpit of the helicopter to dramatize the relation. It is a remarkably effective example of shot sequencing. At crucial 'personal' moments, like the wedding and the prisoner's return to his neighborhood after 14 years, Sheridan and George show the way that such personal, intimate, or interior moments are folded outwards by the watching helicopter's presence. The subject is obliged to look up from her celebration, to look up from his "homecoming moment", to be distracted and indeed abstracted from an inner life. This is dramatized even more effectively in two scenes at the close of the film.

As has been recently reported in the *Irish News*, it is quite common for helicopters to hover over graveyards during funerals in the Nationalist community. In South Armagh, it has been standard practice for years. "In the course of all funerals, helicopter activity would be at its peak," reports an interviewed local priest.

> You would have two or three helicopters in the air at that time and during the burial service they always make a point of hovering over the people assembled for the graveside prayers. Last year we had to invest in a portable speaker and microphone in order to make the prayers audible. It happens at every funeral. It has got to the stage that, if the helicopters weren't there, you would wonder what's wrong. (*Irish News*, 1997: A4)

In *The Boxer*, Sheridan and George make it a point to have helicopters hovering at the two funereal, *mourning* scenes in the movie. Again, they carefully sequence the shots to emphasize both the positions of the watched and the watcher. When young Liam finds the dead body of the boxing trainer Ike in a vacant lot, a hovering helicopter watches as he cradles Ike's head in his lap. Likewise, at the very end of the movie, the villain's wife finds her husband dead under a bridge, as a helicopter stirs the air with its rotors and watches attentively as she grieves, and cradles his bloody head in her lap.

In the helicopter surveillance scenes in *The Boxer* what are usually represented in cinema as private or intimate scenes are in fact liable to be turned inside out. The shot from the ground snaps to the shot from the air, what is usually represented as inner life is exteriorized, watched from above. (As such, the film almost achieves a sort of Brechtian alienation effect —constantly privileging the *positionality* of gazing as an issue.) Further, the film makes clear that the watched is forced to become aware that she or he is being watched. The subject, at the time of *marriage*, *homecoming*, and *grief*, is made to understand that she or he is being surveyed, and that intimacy is liable to exposure or a forced inversion. Begoña Aretxaga, in *Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland* (1997), notes that, as in the Algeria that Fanon describes (and Bhabha elaborates upon), women in the North were often subject to an externalizing form of surveillance. Aretxaga explains: "... in Belfast, a woman wearing a coat eventually became suspected of hiding ammunition. The military attempted to counteract this possibility by literally uncovering the body of women, asking them to open their coats and their handbags at search points to expose them to the soldier's gaze..." (Aretxaga, 1997: 66). What surveillance seeks to accomplish is to oblige people not only to open their coats but their lives and bodies to be exposed "to the soldier's gaze". The control of bodies is central to this, but so too is the control of the space in which these bodies live. As Bogard explains: "Surveillance includes those methods of 'ocular' control, scanning-selection mechanisms of the most diverse sorts, which command objects and events by means of their *exposure*" (78). Subjects become bodies; bodies become objects; objects are exposed. A brief scene from the 1995 Peter Yates film, *The Run of the Country*, makes the exposure of bodies in space by aerial surveillance as clear as possible. An IRA gunman is swimming naked in a lake, with his friends on the shore, as a helicopter appears from nowhere. The man's body is quite literally exposed, naked, as he runs to shore asking for a towel to hide himself. The nakedness of the subject of surveillance is likewise highlighted in Dermot Seymour's 1988 surrealist/ photorealist piece, "The Queen's Own Scottish Borderers Observe the King of the Jews appearing behind Sean McGuigan's Sheep on the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany". Here the body is a figure of Jesus Christ that Seymour uses to gesture towards the internees of the blanket protest and, of course, the gaunt hunger strikers of the early 1980s. But it is also more generally a figure of the subject who is continually monitored. The watching helicopters visually strip and crucify him. His subjectivity is turned outwards, like his arms on the cross, opened like his ribs from hunger inflicted on his body by the state.

I assume a necessary correlation between space and subjectivity here. A space that is always watched by the colonial state can never be possessed collectively. The people who live in this space can never retain complete self-possession, either, but are continually subject to exposure —as their bodies and intimacies are made objects of an unrelenting gaze. The artists I have cited all succeed at problematizing, resisting, and returning that gaze.

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International Journal
of
English Studies

IJES

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Narratives of Internal Exile in Mary Lavin's Short Stories

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ABSTRACT

Paul Tabori's definition of exile and Michael Seidel's discussion of the "exilic mind" are the points of departure for this study of short stories by Mary Lavin. The stories deal with internal exile, meaning marginalisation within the local community or native country, due to that individual will is incompatible with pressure to conform to unwritten rules of society. The narratives of the stories strongly suggest that these characters are subversive according to the dominant ethos of the restrictive Catholic Ireland that Lavin writes about. Women who do not fulfil their enforced social role of wife or mother and the restrictions of young widows feature in several stories. But some stories show that internal exile also affects men, leaving them in a social vacuum. The novella "The Becker Wives" will be discussed at length as an explicit and striking narrative of internal exile on an individual and a social level.

KEYWORDS: Mary Lavin; internal exile; exilic mind; bird as exilic emblem; subversion; status quo; widows; ambiguity; escape; community.

Mary Lavin was born in Massachusetts, in 1912. At the age of ten she went with her returning family to Ireland and lived there for the rest of her life, mainly on a farm in Bective, Co. Meath. She was widowed in her early forties but later remarried. Her production includes books for children and two novels, *The House in Clewe Street* (1945) and *Mary O'Grady* (1950). Lavin was, however, primarily a writer of short stories. She admired in particular Russian exponents

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IJES, vol. 2 (2), 2002, pp. 109-122

of the form, for example Turgenev. She has been compared to her fellow-Irish writer Sean O'Faolain. One of her best-known stories is the novella *The Becker Wives* (1946). Her collections include *Tales from Bective Bridge* (1942), *The Long Ago* (1944), *A Single Lady* (1951), *The Patriot Son* (1956), *A Likely Story* (1957), *The Great Wave* (1962), *A Memory and Other Stories* (1972) and *A Family Likeness* (1985). Mary Lavin died in 1996.

Mary Lavin's stories often deal with characters marginalised in their own community for different reasons. Characters are due to circumstances often either prevented from 'jumping' to a life outside their original rural environment or, on the other hand, forced or persuaded to take the leap into the unknown world of Dublin or abroad. Those who stay in Ireland are unable to develop their lives in a personally satisfying direction and are caught in an existence that may look satisfactory on the outside, but hides discontent that is often unleashed by traumatic events, such as death, or reminders of lost opportunities. The constrictive religious and social morality of Ireland in the stories causes suffering and turns those forced to live by these conventions into internal exiles. This essay will discuss examples of internal exiles in Mary Lavin's short fiction. But first it is essential to define the focal point of view of my argument: the concept of exile.

The word exile originates in the Latin, meaning to 'to jump', but exile in a modern sense has multiple meanings and can refer to both reality and desire. Paul Tabori refers to exile as ranging between expulsion from the native country and exclusion from community in a more general sense, for example within one's own country, and being forced to live in a remote location, such as a craggy island (Tabori, 1972: 23). In other words, a person may regard him/herself as an exile due to alienation from the community within which she or he lives, even within his/her own country. Indeed, individuals have been deliberately ostracised from their native community without being forced to go abroad. This is unofficial, internal, exile: when one stays but still does not feel completely part of the home community. Many of Mary Lavin's characters fall into this category of exiles.

Michael Seidel discusses the concept of the "exilic mind" in a literary context, based on illusion, yet deriving from experience. Exile, thus, evolves from the familiar but often strives towards unexplored imagined territory (Seidel, 1986: 2). The urge to wander, and then to return home, only to want to wander again is carried over into many literary characters of which Odysseus, of course, is the classic example. Also Lavin's stories present characters of this ambivalent nature.

It cannot be ignored that any act that renders a person to be regarded as an exile, internal or external, is subversive. An exile does not follow the beaten track of life, but searches for the route that best suits his or her individual aspirations and desires. In an intellectually narrow-minded and intolerant environment this behaviour is often regarded as disruptive and a threat to the *status quo*. Exiles are in fact battling to impose individual will against enforced collective consensus. Internal exiles, who for various reasons stay in their provincial place, have to contend with almost being regarded as a criminal or as mentally unstable.

The rural Irish settings in Mary Lavin's fiction are mostly either the Midlands or Co.

Meath, and are often contrasted with Dublin, the most immediate metropolis, where you get a good education or a good doctor. Dublin can also provide momentary escape into anonymity and amorous adventure, away from the forbidding eyes of your local community. But for those who live in Dublin the city can be equally restrictive as a small provincial town, isolating like a prison, and a disappointment for failed hopes and aspirations for people who have moved there from the countryside, in search of a more satisfying life. The literary exilic *wanderlust* is dominant in the nature of several of Lavin's ambivalent characters.

The morally and socially restrictive life depicted in Mary Lavin's short stories is mainly due to the pressure of maintaining appearances, and affects both men and women. In this microcosm minor incidents are often made into major events in an otherwise uneventful existence. Lavin's stories consistently focus on individuals and their personal situation, by which she makes subtle and indirect comments on life in Ireland. Her stories do not make overt political statements. Instead any critique is delivered through portrayal of characters and their lives. Several stories reveal that life in rural communities may often hide personal tragedies. This is emphasised by Lavin's narrative style, stressing characterisation, turn of personal events and social milieu. As Zack Bowen points out in his monograph on Lavin, the motifs of her stories are often linked to people, settings and circumstances in her own life: her daughters, her early widowhood and people she knew (Bowen, 1975: 21). In her writing Lavin takes on the role of a distant observer, yet looking from within; she is a commentator on different kinds of social exile in Ireland, affecting mostly women, although she is not averse to describing men in similar situations. Her stories often explore the lives of women from diverse social backgrounds, living under different conditions in Ireland.

One category of women that feature repeatedly in Lavin's stories is widows, one parallel to her own experience. These female characters are in different ways trying to cope with a situation where their social status has been reduced. These women are not expected to look for a new man, especially not if they have children, as they are then considered to have fulfilled their purpose in life as mothers. In other words, widows are to follow the official ethos that demands a denial of sexual desire for pleasure and comfort, because procreation is the only reason for sex in the morally restrictive Ireland that Lavin writes about. As the young widow in the story "A Tragedy" realises, there is no escape from the alienating life that makes her an internal exile, living with her sister and brother-in-law like an old dependent relative without an independent life. As a woman she has no identity apart from being a widow. Another young widow, in the story "Happiness", must more explicitly come to terms with the fact that widowhood has delivered her into a permanent state of social isolation. Her defence mechanism against this desperate situation is keeping up appearances and the belief that her life is, nevertheless, happy. In the stories "The Cuckoo-Spit" and "In a Café" widowhood is most explicitly implied to be a claustrophobic cell, where women have to restrain their desires, lock up sexuality and throw away the key.

In "The Cuckoo-Spit" Vera, a middle-aged widow of a well-respected politician meets

Fergus, a younger man. He teases her by suggesting that on their first meeting she had been "tempted to go further" (Lavin, 1970: 104). Despite their affinity for each other, they prevent their relationship from developing beyond accepted moral boundaries; the cuckoo-spit is at work as they protect themselves from amorous adventure by raising obstacles. At one point Fergus asks Vera: "isn't everything outside our experience until it comes within it?" (Lavin 1970: 118). By their actions the pair refuse to let their experience take hold within them. Neither of them -for different reasons- are willing to 'jump' outside acceptable morality to reach within themselves to find that knowledge of intimate involvement. To apply Seidel's argument of the "exilic mind" they have wandered but returned home, only to want to leave again.

Mary, the young widow in the story "In a Café" turns her trips to Dublin -away from her country home- into moments of imagined possibilities of escape and new love. Her brief meeting with a foreign painter is such a moment. The stranger represents the outside, beyond the boundaries of domestic constraints. Although Mary restrains herself from jumping at his invitation she has at least admitted to herself a need to fill the emotional void left by her husband's death. Like Vera in "The Cuckoo Spit" Mary will not give in to sexual desire. Mary's trips to Dublin are also Odyssean voyages: the traveller will set out on repeated unsatisfactory trips, only to return home and plan the next excursion. The in-built protection against rocking the moral norm is too strong to overcome.

Lavin also deals with single women and their way of coping in an environment where a woman has no definite role to play unless she marries or is strong enough to carve out a life on her own. One of Lavin's best known stories, "A Single Lady", encapsulates the fate of lost opportunities for Isabel, the "single lady" in the story. At forty Isabel knows that she will never marry but continue life in this, for a woman, socially unacceptable state. She had gone to university but returned to the family home, which she now shares with her widowed father, a man who has seen better days. Their prosperity, initially based on her mother's assets, has dwindled. The lack of servants in their house and the poor state of shoes and clothes are clear evidence of the decay.

The narrative strongly purports that Isabel is not singularly a victim, but in addition suggests that she has not explored her rare opportunities as an educated Irish woman. Isabel likes to think of herself as the one who has made sacrifices but now has been let down by her father. She had seemingly given up an independent life to look after him due to social pressure rather than choice, but there is also a subtle implication that her decision to return had not been entirely involuntary. Returning home had also been a way for her to escape the outside world and retaining a sense of security and social status, as the daughter from a prosperous family. Isabel had tried to jump, to leave the nest, but pulled back and came back to her family home. But the family's social decline and her spinsterhood have now turned to bitterness. Yet, she has retained aloofness in her attitude towards the outside world.

Isabel's interior voice rules that living in an anti-intellectual environment makes her what I call an internal exile. In fact, her family's loss of social status is what she deplores the most.

Nevertheless, until now she has managed to keep up social appearances -to herself at least- by having sustained a sense of authority in the house. But her position has recently changed as the live-in servant girl, Annie Bowles, has won her father's attention. These changed circumstances now alienate Isabel from her home and from her father; she is losing the only social role for her to play, as the woman of the house in her family home. Also, because of her lack of experience of an intimate relationship with a man, Isabel is jealous of her father's new friendship, which she can only see as sexually sordid. Her contempt for their liaison is encouraged by the fact that the understanding between the two that Isabel observes is warmer than the "distant" and "cool manner" she had witnessed in her father towards herself and her mother. She distances herself socially from Annie Bowles most strongly by referring to her as "the creature", echoing the name of the man-made social outcast in *Frankenstein*. To Isabel Annie is as frightening and threatening as Shelley's character because she represents what Isabel has sheltered from, crude and basic life, despite the fact that it has closed in on her as the family's prosperity has declined.

The narrative clearly suggests that Isabel's father is also an internal exile. He had married above his social status and with the death of his wife his acquired social position has been undermined. Nevertheless, for many years he has consciously, albeit reluctantly, exiled himself from his original social milieu. His initial objection to allowing the servant to move into the house shows his reluctance to openly admit his confusion about his social belonging. His social epic voyage has resulted in a return to familiar territory, personified by Annie. His attraction to her symbolises his explicit return to his original social environment, where he is in actual fact most comfortable. The narrative balances the points of view that both daughter and father have had to deal with exilic situations; it concludes that Isabel's lack of compassion and emotional paralysis is to be pitied, while the father's newly accepted sense of social place, confirmed by his relationship with Annie, is not condemned, underlining that both men and women are victims of social pressure.

Lavin's stories suggest that not much is needed to be considered subversive and, in effect, become an internal exile in a small town or a provincial city. Even an urge for momentary escape from that environment often causes an unofficial indictment by people who reject those who do not comply with the unwritten rules of conduct in the community. The story "My Molly" demonstrates that there is a fine line between being different and being considered subversive -threatening to the *status quo*- and compared to a dangerous criminal. The narrator of the opening of the story, Molly's husband, shows his own prejudice in this respect as he gives an affectionate account of his wife and refers positively about her characteristics that he regards as negative in any other woman. He compares her to a bird, a recurring emblem of individuality and free-spirited female characters in Lavin's stories. Being the mother of five children has put a stop to Molly's visits to Dublin from the small town, but unknown to her husband, she still holds these yearnings. She still "badly needs a bit of change" (Lavin, 1987: 218). Molly seizes the opportunity for a trip to Dublin when the police decide to go there to look for old Sam, another outsider, who has disappeared.

Molly and Sam share a desire for space and escape, underlined by birds flying over their heads when they are talking together. They are both internal exiles; she has recently moved to the town and he repeatedly wants to stray away from the claustrophobic small community, which is what he has done in the past. Other inhabitants there cannot comprehend that anybody would want to leave voluntarily. The interest of the police emphasises the suggestion of a criminal act of subversion in leaving your local community. It is also considered abnormal behaviour and a mark of insanity. Therefore somebody like Sam is judged as guilty in the eyes of the law on several accounts. Molly, on the other hand, manages to curtail her desire for freedom and consequently is not judged on that issue.

The search party going to Dublin in a small car represents a miniature Ireland and the passengers represent different groups in the country. The policemen, one off-duty, are the State, busybodies who are willing to exclude anybody from society who shows the slightest sign of not conforming, even to unwritten laws. Miss Muggins takes the name of a fool, but as the sister of the local TD, she represents the new political elite. They have claimed their new privileged role only on the merit of their relationship to those who were on the winning side in the scramble for power after independence. The Captain is a member of the remnants of the deposed big-house gentry. His alliance with Sam, from whom the Captain borrows money, confirms his status as an internal exile in post-colonial Ireland. Molly is the only one in the car without a defined place of social belonging, which is enough to make her an internal exile in a provincial society; she cannot be pinned down.

Molly's shopping for the family in Dublin is out of duty, partially brought about by her husband's protests about her joining the search party to Dublin. Her shopping is also a compromise between her 'duty' according to the norm and her individual will. Her latent urge for escape draws her to Dun Laoghaire, the docking area of the mail boat to Britain, a potent symbol of exile from provincial Irish life. When Molly finds Sam there their exilic minds are united in mutual understanding. Watching the mail boat, they wish in their dreams to jump to a different life far away. But in reality they have to retreat to home and hold their fort against intolerance against those who do not want to be imprisoned by restrictions of the norm.

In the story "Loving Memory", restrictive issues of morality leading to exile within the community are explored. The supposedly perpetual bachelor Matthias Grimes surprised the villagers by bringing a bride, Alicia, back to his small town from Lisdoonvarna, the capital of matchmaking in Ireland. Alicia had also been presumed to remain single and was to have been shipped off to America on the day they married. From the beginning of their married life the couple created their own exilic world of marital harmony. The narrative stresses that the neighbours objected to the couple's showing of affection, "for all the world as if they were on a balcony in some Italian resort" (Lavin, 1987: 271). Also after they have children Matthias and Alicia remained a close couple, with a life of their own, even protected from their children, who are called love children by the disapproving villagers, thinking that intimacy was for somewhere else, not in your own community.

Because Alicia is from elsewhere, she is the vilified of the two. She is compared to a small bird, the emblem of flightiness and non-commitment, and as a woman in a tower, signifying that she is perceived as different, aloof and alien. Her elaborate dresses add to the locals' image of her as apart from them. After Alicia's death the women in the village allude to her as a threatening ghost. The threat to the norm that Alicia had posed in life continues in death. What is unfamiliar is seen as strange and therefore dangerous to the *status quo*, the ideal state of narrow-minded provinciality.

Provinciality engulfs country towns but also provides cover to escape the restrictive life to Dublin, which from a distance is deemed as a preferable option to staying in a small community. For those living in the country, Dublin symbolises freedom from internal exile, but for those living there, life in the city is just as pressurised as for those living in the country. This condition and the ambiguous relationship to Ireland and to home are central themes in several of Lavin's stories.

The railway had once carried away Lally, the protagonist in "The Will", from her hometown to Dublin. Her move had been an escape to be able to marry the man of her choice, against her mother's will. Her family regarded him as a social disgrace, and they had been proven right in that Lally has had a hard life in the city. The title of the story, however, refers not only to the legal document which expresses a dead mother's last wish to disinherit one of her daughters, Lally, but also includes those, like her, who show individual will. As a widow she has now returned for her mother's funeral, only to find that the pressure to conform to appearances of respectability is still put on her by her siblings.

Despite her initial quest for freedom, Lally has through her hardship in the city reached the conclusion that she has not been liberated. Instead, urban life has speeded up weariness and she has aged more than her sisters and brother who have remained close to home. With hindsight, for Lally returning to the city from the town no longer holds the imagination of a better and brighter life away from familiar territory. What had many years before pulled her away had proved to be an illusion. She concludes that, "Life was just the same in the town, in the city, and in the twisty countryside. Life was the same in the darkness and the light....You were yourself always, no matter where you went or what you did" (Lavin, 1970: 140). In other words, the city has not improved or changed her life. Her fear of God for her dead mother's soul shows that despite the fact that she did leave home physically, her mind has not freed itself from the sense of guilt she feels for trying to grasp what proved non-existent, namely change.

The fact that you cannot escape yourself and doubts about home anywhere, and maybe even less so in Dublin, is also at the centre of attention in the story "At Sallygap". To Manny Ryan, the main character, several places represent escape: Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire, Holyhead, London and Paris. But Dublin, where he keeps a shop with his wife Annie, suggests imprisonment. On a trip to the Wicklow Mountains, outside Dublin, he sees the mail boat to Britain pulling out to sea. Seeing the ship at a distance, away from home, reminds him of his failure to jump, when as a young musician he had chosen not to go with a band to try his luck in Paris. Instead, because he was persuaded by his future wife to stay behind, his emotional life has from then on been paralysed. At that point he turned his back on exile, what would have been a subversive action, and rejected individual will. His act of self-denial is symbolically illustrated by the description of when his forgotten fiddle was smashed against the quay when a friend threw it to him from the ship that would have taken him away from Ireland, into external exile.

His married life has been a dull routine without passion. In Wicklow, outside Dublin, he can face the fact that in his dingy city-home and shop "he was imprisoned for life" (Lavin, 1987: 32). Yet, Manny had been sucked back into the false security of staying in his native country, afraid to jump. His passive existence has smothered his urge to go abroad, although he encourages young people to leave Ireland. He is resigned to his situation to the degree that he even convinces himself that he is glad that he had not gone to Paris, and is now left with a sentimental attachment to the Irish countryside. Yet he stands out from the locals in the country pub because he is wearing a bowler hat, a city emblem. But Dublin, his adopted hometown and once his haven of freedom, away from a rural native place, has not fulfilled expectation, and he still momentarily thinks of Paris as an escape to freedom. He is alienated from both Irish city-life and rural community, an internal exile. He still momentarily imagines wandering away from his pitiful existence, only to be pulled back to his "prison".

A twist in the story occurs when Manny returns home and the narrative switches to Annie's point of view. Due to the lack of communication between the two his wife, unknowingly to him, is also discontented in her marriage. She, however ironically, identifies that her husband had "giv[en] up his own freedom" (Lavin, 1987: 36) to marry her. Still, what she claims is lacking in his character, more emotion and temperament, had been quenched when she persuaded him to stay with her. Marriage had been her intended escape route in pursuit of a better personal life, but has instead proved to be a dull existence also for her. She had jumped to an imaginary idea of marriage that has not been fulfilled. Husband and wife are trapped in a static conventional way of life, which is dissatisfactory for both, as they have become emotionally exiled from each other.

The constraint of social convention and its drastic psychological consequences based on Victorian values are benchmarks for propriety in Lavin's intricate novella "The Becker Wives". The story is set in Dublin at an unspecified time, but in the earlier part of the twentieth century rather than at the time when it was written. The Beckers are prosperous corn merchants and believe in what today is called family values. They produce numerous babies with predictable regularity, but no family member has the courage to grow as a human being; instead they conform to the family norm. Their conformity is underlined by the fact that the new Becker wives soon start to resemble each other. The new Becker women have assimilated to the Becker life style, extending to a preference for old furniture instead of new, to compensate for the fact that their money is relatively new and made through commerce, rather than inherited through generations of wealth.

The narrative of the story reflects the constraints of the Beckers, who neither succeed at giving an air of "respectability" nor manage to safeguard a social position in established Dublin society. Their isolation in the city is emphasised in several ways. For example, the omniscient narrator observes that during an evening out, the Beckers "were the only people in the whole restaurant who were totally inconspicuous" (Lavin, 1987: 306). They only socialise within the family, and due to their isolation the Beckers have married partners they have found either through business or daily routines. The family does not have strong ties to the city in which they live; the narrative makes no references to place names in Dublin. The mentioning of the Shelbourne hotel is the only way the story can be linked to Dublin, denoting that the Beckers go about their business in a social vacuum and lack of belonging to place. Their alienation is further stressed by the fact that their surname is foreign and that most of them have strongly Anglo-Irish first names. The Beckers are social exiles from other affluent people and are not highly regarded in society, because of their lack of ancestral pedigree. Instead of being distinguished members of established society they are internal exiles.

The Beckers' superficial lives are carefully calculated, a family trait inherited from their parents, to achieve respectability in established society, and echoes the Victorian values by which the society in which they live is ruled. The choice of wives for the siblings had been made with particular attention given to their "suitability for marriage and child-bearing" (Lavin, 1987: 299). One important role for the Becker wives is to follow in the footsteps of their matriarchal mother and mother-in-law, who only lived for the prosperity of her family. The fact that the Becker children, four sons and one daughter, were brought up by their father to believe that "marriage represented safety and security" (Lavin, 1987: 300) stresses that the events unfolded in the story undermine that foundation upon which the Beckers have been brought up to rely. They now believe these safeguards to be the most important components for a successful albeit uneventful life. It is inconceivable to them that a member of their family could be a poor judge in choosing a spouse who would not adjust to what the family requires of all its members, to sustain qualities to avoid upheaval in their ordinary lives of acquired bourgeois routines.

Theobald is the sibling who shows enhanced concern about the Beckers' social insignificance and tries to imagine that his family is held in higher social esteem than is the case. He is conscious of class and prefers the Beckers to be noticed by others rather than the reverse. He lacks emotion and sees himself as apart and aloof from his brothers and sister, especially in their choice of partners. He objects to the fact that three of them have married socially beneath them. When his social notions become more exaggerated and explicit his attitude alienates him from the rest of his family. The majority of the Beckers have inadvertently surrendered to their peripheral social position, but their youngest brother has not accepted this form of exile from established society. The narrative accusingly points out that he scorns his family and in-laws for their "ordinariness and mediocrity" while he "nurtured strange notions of pride and ambition", to which "had been added intellectual snobbery and professional stuffiness" (Lavin, 1987: 304-5). The narrative voice severely condemns Theobald for having acquired ideas of his own grandeur compared with his family. Ironically Theobald's choice of bride, Flora, proves to be socially the most disastrous match of all among the Beckers. His choice is based on trying to bring social respectability and cultural sophistication into his own clan by introducing a woman of various artistic talents and from an "old family".

Even before Flora's first appearance there is, however, a premonition of chaos and the unleashing of a force the Beckers will be unable to control. During the evening several casual references to madness anticipate the arrival of the mentally disturbed Flora, a bird in a gilded cage, who proves to have obsessions that are also aimed to gain social acceptance, albeit from a different perspective than the Beckers. The premonition of ensuing disaster is implied in the narrative's early mentioning of Flora in the past tense; she will in the near future only be an unsettling memory to them.

Flora is foreseen to be different from the rest of the Becker wives. While they are stout, one of them correctly imagines Flora as a "a little creature, volatile as a lark, a summer warbler, a creature so light and airy that it hardly rested on the ground at all" (Lavin, 1987: 323). Her future husband refers to Flora as a light an eater as a bird. Her eating habits are in stark contrast with the indulgence of the Beckers, whose ludicrous consumption during family dinners the narrative ironically refers to as "a race". Flora's first introduction to the Beckers takes place during one of these family gatherings; her entrance with Theobald is as impromptu as his brother Samuel's introduction on the same occasion of his future wife, Honoria, is formal and conventional.

During Flora's first meeting with her future in-laws she stages a trick. She imagines taking photographs of them all, a projection of Flora's perceived ideal of respectability personified by the Beckers. While the imagined photography session brings momentary stability to Flora it unsettles the Beckers; at the same time, and if only fleetingly, it makes them see themselves as they really are according to the narrative, "unnatural … rigid" and "ridiculous" (Lavin, 1987: 331), yet willing to laugh at their discovery. That said, they do not mind laughing at each other, but not at themselves.

After Flora has become a Becker wife, she remains different to her sisters-in-law. She attracts attention to the Beckers in public in a way of which they previously could only have dreamt. They persist in showing their social inadequacy by joining outsiders gazing at the new Mrs Becker as if she were not related to them at all -an exotic flower, to allude to her name. Almost the whole family briefly abandon their stuffiness and allow themselves to be influenced by Flora's unconventional tastes and whims. She brings poetry and imagination into their drawing rooms. In his first adoring raptures her husband takes her condition for being a "real talent … for acting" (Lavin 1987: 332). Her brother-in law Samuel has a Pre-Raphaelite image of Flora as dangerous and alien, yet alluring -another Victorian allusion. The Becker family represents a bourgeois, constrained and placid life, whereas Flora is the opposite: artistic, flamboyant, non-conformist. But enveloped by conventionality the Beckers cannot recognise the signs in Flora that her unconventionality is planting the seed of her ensuing mental illness.

The momentary change in the lives of the Beckers due to Flora's influence contrasts with the characteristics in her and the other Becker wives. Flora is on the surface ruled by spontaneity, creativity and imagination, which to the Beckers is alien behaviour and therefore captivating. Their own aptitude for conformity assures them that the flamboyance they see in Flora's character will disappear as soon as she is married to Theobald. Marriage also becomes a two-faced issue for the Becker wives in their interaction with Flora. Although she is desperate to get married, to abide with convention, she conveys the idea to her sisters-in-law that marriage is a restrictive bond. But again the narrative voice expresses an opinion, as women's wedding rings are described as "thick bands of gold, guarded by big solitaires set in massive claws" (Lavin 1987: 336). The threatening and suffocating words suggest marriage as enforced captivity and lonely, and a state that only convention would make a woman enter voluntarily. Flora makes the other women feel uneasy because her ways overthrow what to them is the natural order of life. Significantly, however, while Flora rejects marriage in principle because she knows that it restricts particularly a woman's individual will, she is eager to marry, in order to safeguard an acceptable social position for herself as a woman, to be a wife.

Flora lives in a world of imagination into which the others cannot enter because of their ordinariness. She, on the other hand, cannot enter their world, because she is out of the ordinary. Writing poetry enables her to live within her dream world of similes, keep her mental condition in check and ease her frustration. The irony is that while she has artistic creative talents she is physically infertile, which matters more in society than artistic ability. Her character is in sharp contrast to the Beckers who are fertile but do not grow as individuals, and have no desire to do so. After her collection of poems has been published she loses the safety valve to keep her trauma from surfacing.

Flora increasingly impersonates the characteristics of the other women as her frustration, and consequently her illness, increases. She sees Samuel's pregnant wife, Honoria, as the most serious threat to her own vulnerability, as they married about the same time. Flora projects her sister-in-law's situation and persona onto herself. She in fact tries to conjure up a "resemblance" to the other Becker wives, in order to fit into the expected conventional sequence of events, marriage quickly followed by pregnancy.

Nevertheless, the narrative never criticises Flora's behaviour because it is justified by her desperate search for social respectability. Instead, the narrative voice enhances the plight of Flora, whose abilities are favourably contrasted with Honoria's poor intelligence and lack of education, to further enhance Flora's humiliating efforts to assume the identity of a woman who is obviously inferior to her, including lack of individuality. Put into this context, her condition takes on a further tragic aspect, as her mental illness is suggested to have been triggered by social pressure to conform. Flora's final outburst, in the persona of Honoria, confirms her projection of her own inability to deliver what is expected of her, domesticity and breeding, by seeing Honoria as a mirror image of herself. In Flora's imagination she switches identity with her sister-in-law and thereby becomes the socially accepted one by adopting the character of the pregnant Honoria, who consequently she imagines as the interior exile.

Flora wants parts of the conventional life of the other Becker wives, while they want the social status of being respected by the establishment. The narrative explains Flora's strategy: "Forward in time or back in time, it made no difference to Flora as long as she could escape from the tedium and the boredom of the present, just as it didn't matter to her whether it was Henrietta or Honoria she was impersonating as long as she stepped out of her own personality and became another being" (Lavin 1987: 345). Her psychological condition is in reality not different from what the other Beckers want for themselves. They aspire to what they cannot achieve, social acceptance in established society, respectability and security. But their self-discipline and lack of individual will or imagination stop them from crossing the line to enter the realm of madness. Theobald, despite his efforts to be more sophisticated and cultured than his family, does not have the sensitivity to notice that Flora is falling deeper and deeper into a psychological abyss. Because he is as conventional as his siblings, her growing psychological instability only makes him increasingly embarrassed and irritated; the narrative points out his general "lack of understanding". When the rest of the family only sees Flora's mental collapse as a "disgrace". Samuel, Honora's husband, deplores that the breath of fresh air brought into the lives of the family by Flora is gone. But his conventionality makes him simultaneously perceive her as "a flitting spirit never meant to mix with the likes of them" (Lavin 1987: 363). In other words, the staid Becker family, busy to conform to social convention and eager to fit into established society, would never have harmonised with Flora's apparent personality or interests.

Previous critics have focused on the theme of psychological disorder in the story: Zack Bowen calls it "a study in schizophrenia" (Bowen 1975: 33), and A. A Kelly sees Flora as "caught in the Becker cage" (Kelly, 1980: 21). Both comments are valid but they are not sufficient for a more comprehensive understanding of the story. It must be remembered that the schizophrenia is not only psychologically conditioned, but is also brought on by the social pressure that all the characters are trying to live up to in different ways. Flora's initially flamboyant behaviour, followed by adopting another person's character and subsequent psychological breakdown, is also her inverted way of trying to escape her inability to conform. She does not possess the self-discipline or the self-effacing conviction of the role of women in public life shared by the other Beckers. But escape is not possible, which is firmly established by Flora's mental breakdown, nor is it possible for the Beckers to flee their peripheral social position, no matter how hard they try to play by the rules of convention. Zack Bowen correctly observes in the story "the theme of the inescapability of one's fundamental life style" (Bowen, 1975: 34). I would like to extend that statement and add that this inescapability makes all characters internal exiles; they are uncomfortable in the environment in which they live and aspire to social goals that are unobtainable for them.

The women in "The Becker Wives" stand out as the most explicit victims of the morally and socially claustrophobic society in which Lavin's characters have to exist, rather than live. But their conditions are different from those of Lavin's other female characters in that they belong to a more prosperous section of society. Nevertheless, their lives in Dublin are socially isolated and they have to contend with living up to norms of established society, norms the Becker family have set up for themselves in order to belong to a class from which they are in fact alienated. Flora, with the required pedigree to belong to that category to which her in-laws hotly aspire, is an outcast from that class because of her inability to conform to expectations as a woman: to have children and to focus on domestic duties as a wife. The narrative voice in the novella supports Flora's action in her claustrophobic situation and concludes that Victorian convention prevents individualistic and free-spirited people, women in particular, and can create a trauma leading to mental illness. From different perspectives, the fate of women in the upper echelons of society is no less cruel than that experienced by women in a less prosperous environment in Lavin's other stories.

The stories by Mary Lavin discussed here all deal with aspects of internal exile. Several female characters have attempted or are still trying to move away from the exilic condition. Isabel in "A Single Lady" exiled herself from life when she had made the conscious decision to return home. The young widows who feature in several stories are held back from finding new love by the unconscious abidance with the moral ethos and unwritten social code of conduct, forcing them to exile themselves from the company of men, through the in-built fear of being defeated by temptation. Even though these women recognise their dissatisfaction with life, they are not willing to 'jump' or to stray from home, which functions both as a prison and a place offering security.

But men are also shown to be exilic victims. Isabel's father in "A Single Lady" is an exile from his original social environment, which he realises in his attraction to the servant-girl. Manny, in "At Sallygap", has lived to regret his missed opportunity to go abroad to try his luck as a musician. Instead, he is trapped in a marriage that is not going anywhere. The narrative switch from Manny's thoughts to his wife's dissatisfaction emphasises marriage as exile, for both men and women, from opportunities in life, although often initially regarded as an escape from another misery.

Exilic emblems recur in Lavin's stories. Both Flora, in "The Becker Wives", and Alicia, in "In Loving Memory", are compared to small birds. This simile equates these two women with a free spirit who refuses to stay in the nest and give all her attention to domestic duty; instead, she wants to have an independent life. It is significant that Alicia's only way to stay in Ireland is to marry, otherwise she would have had to emigrate. Place also carries exilic importance. For those living in the country, Dublin symbolises freedom from internal exile, but for those living there, life in the city is just as pressurised as for those living in the country. Manny, in "At Sallygap", living in Dublin but not from there originally, has come to realise the constrictions of the city. The mail boat in the distance, pulling out from Dun Laoghaire, represents escape from internal exile. As for so many others, for Manny escape only becomes an option when he senses freedom at a distance, without the danger of becoming reality. Lally in "The Will" is unable to detach herself from the guilt emanating from her escape to Dublin, which has not brought her the freedom anticipated.

The omniscient narrators recurrently make their voices heard in the stories. These voices convey sympathy for those living under exilic conditions. The narratives demonstrate equal understanding for men and women; city dwellers as well as for those living in rural areas. The narrative voice is only overtly negative towards the Beckers in "The Becker Wives", in order to emphasise the cruel social pressure on the intellectual Flora.

The most obvious conclusion about characters -both men and women- in the stories who are trapped in constrictive lives is that dissatisfaction is not likely to lead to rebellious behaviour. Instead they more often accept and consequently remain restrained by social convention and rules of conformity. They are not prepared to openly act upon their discontent, because the behavioural norm does not tolerate stepping out of line. Those who try to break away are considered subversive; they are internal exiles. Individual aspirations that would rock the boat of social stability are suppressed and these individuals are locked into isolation, and freedom from social restriction becomes momentary exilic wandering, only to swiftly emotionally choked by convention before the *status quo* is allowed to be broken.

But not only characters are exiles. The immediacy of the voice of the omniscient narrator in relation to the reader in the stories, in turn, removes it from the plot and the characters. Consequently, the narrator adopts the part of a distant observer and thereby the role of an inverted exile in relation to situations and characters who are not part of the concept of exile. This alien relationship occurs because the narrative voice prioritises conveying a particular agenda to the reader, that of exile, above other aspects in the lives of the characters.

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International Journal
of
English Studies

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I am, therefore I'm not (Woman)

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ABSTRACT

This paper uses Object Relations theory to think about the dynamics governing the production of cultural identity in Irish Studies. Arguably women's writing is positioned within Irish studies in what Luce Irigaray terms "the place of the mother". The mother within the nuclear and patriarchal determined family is allocated the function of object through which the other members of the family derive their own identity. When a woman writer inscribes her subjective presence then she disrupts the production of other's identity, and challenges the dynamics of a family structure that need to rely on her absence from it. Such refusal to be simply an object is often met with resistance. This paper argues that Eavan Boland's collection *The Lost Land* alters Boland's object use within the cultural context of Irish studies, and it examines some of the criticism attaching to it accordingly.

KEYWORDS: daughter; inter-subjective; Irish Studies; maternal body; Mother Ireland; Oedipal crisis; Object Relations; phallic mother; the place of the mother; Eavan Boland.

Irish Studies can be understood as a discursive symbolic space in the terms set out by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993). Bourdieu argued that neither a single institution nor individual was responsible for the manufacture of "reputations", but rather that it was indeed the dynamics that prevailed in the whole "field of production" itself that authenticated and built the profile of a cultural producer. Bourdieu describes this "field" as "the system of objective relations" that pertains between "institution, review, magazine, academy, coterie, dealer" and "publisher" (Bourdieu, 1993: 78). A field or space of symbolic production can also be considered in psychoanalytic terms in which case the "objective relations" of the

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IJES, vol. 2 (2), 2002, pp. 123-134

sociologist become the "Object Relations" of the analyst. Object Relations theory contends that not only do we relate to each other inter-subjectively, but also as objects, which we use in various modes of relationship with each other.[2] In *Like Subject, Love Objects* (1995) Jessica Benjamin takes the standard Object Relations observation that woman is the primary object because she is the first means by which the child mediates its relationship to itself and, she argues, this normal psychic operation is often culturally protracted well beyond its initial usefulness in societies that fetishise the selflessness of a mother. In such societies a woman's object use is privileged over her recognition as a subject.

If the 'objective relations' that pertain between text and the discursive culture are understood as psychoanalytically implicated in a set of 'Object Relations', the question of the family in which a set operates is raised. If the family in this case is understood to be the family of Irish Studies, then the object function of the woman writer within this family is to authenticate the Irish subject at the expense of her own. Thus the aesthetic presentation of a female self-identity necessarily disrupts the precarious balance of the 'family' and questions the 'subject' on which claims for cultural authority are made. The object relations of this family are inhospitable to the articulating self-presence of women writers. The paper thus considers how women's writing disrupts the object relations necessary to produce the subjectivity of another —be that a collective nationalist persona, a unified and visionary Irish Studies 'symbolic space', a self-deconstructed 'subject' of Irish Studies, or indeed a critical perspective invested in protecting the terms of a specific form of cultural authority.

The mother within the nuclear and patriarchal determined family is allocated the function of object through which the other members of the family derive their own identity, and whose subjective absence guarantees their presence. When a woman insists on her own subjectivity she disrupts this process and challenges the dynamics of a family structure predicated on that belief. In so challenging the mechanics of how the subjectivity of the others in the family are guaranteed, the subject and the family is destabilised and the response is often one of resisting the self-validation of the mother-object. Later the paper will look at how Eavan Boland's collection *The Lost Land* (1998) is met with this punitive and denying response because it alters the object relations that exist between reader, critic and text in Irish Studies that are responsible for building literary reputations.

THE FAMILY OF IRISH STUDIES

The continued use of the mother as an object, and the resistance to her subjectivity is traceable to a cultural privileging of an understanding of symbolisable subjectivity as beginning with the Oedipal crisis. The Oedipal crisis depends on the foreclosure of the possibility of recognition of the mother as a subject. The mother object's *presence* is sanctioned in the symbolic only because she represents lack, that is, brought into existence or symbolic representation when the son realises she doesn't have a penis. Specifically this means the providing of the perspective of the Oedipal child as the authentic view, and not co-recognition of the mother's perspective that registers no such horror at a supposed lack. Within cultural nationalism the view of the child was repeated until it achieved the status of a historical orthodoxy. This (lacking) phallic mother's selflessness confirms the son's, and thus the nation's, subjectivity, as for instance in the Padraic

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[2] See, for example, Bollas, (1987; 1993; 1995).

Pearse poem, "The Mother", which was written on the eve of his execution in his mother's voice. The opening lines are:

> I do not grudge them: Lord, I do not grudge
> My two strong sons that I have seen go out
> To break their strength and die, they and a few,
> In bloody protest for a glorious thing (Pearse, 1917: 333)

The self-lessness of the mother who doesn't "begrudge" her sons to the nationalist cause, is echoed in the idealist constitutional 'self-lessness' of Irish mothers. The mother/woman of the Irish 'Free State's' constitution has been modelled on "the image of a passive, self-sacrificing 'mother' figure [which] has strong roots in Irish Catholicism: [and is] linked with an image of Mary as a woman who obeyed without question and devoted her life to the service of her son" (O'Connor, 1997: 79). In popular nationalist terms phallic Mother Ireland functioned as an object through which 'her' citizens mediate a symbolic relationship to their themselves as subjects, demonstrating Jean-François Lyotard's argument that:

> Woman could indeed be accepted and honoured by the citizen and the politician as mother, the mother of their sons: for as it happens, she is the indispensable intermediary between them and these sons. The*corpus scions* cannot be reproduced without the belly of women. [...] Goddesses of fertility are more orgiastic than civic, and their cult is maintained in Greece by banishing it to the obscurity of the Bacchae; it is eliminated in one by Christianity, then sublimated as a cult of Mary. The male Christian Westerner does not pay homage to women but to his own reproductive force, stockpiled in the belly of the virgin and exploited in that of the mother .... Christianity has already posed the question: should women be educated, and how. Capitalism generalises the method proposes below: exclusion of women based on homologation, not exile. Capitalism contributes to the destruction of their position within the family enclosure; according to its needs, it even partially integrates their reproductive function by acting indirectly on their propension to procreate and by treating as commodities their products, those famous sons, as well as the bellies that bear them. (Lyotard, 1989: 111-121)

Whilst a woman's subjective presence was of little interest to the fledgling state, her body certainly wasn't. Pat O'Connor writes of republic that "within the context of the ideological parameters of the state, the roman catholic church and invisible patriarchy, the existence of women's personhood other than at a reproductive level was effectively a non issue" (O'Connor, 1997: 180).

Irish Studies is configured by the terms of the nuclear[3] patriarchal family, which has been described as a family unit in which

> The issue of the rights of all the individuals involved, particularly women and children, to privacy, autonomy, and self-determination is obscured, the implication being that, by some process of osmosis, their identities, wishes, etc., will coincide with those of the head of the household —or if they conflict, they will be subsumed within it. This ideology is supported in Ireland by the church, state, and the invisible patriarchy. (O'Connor, 1997: 182-183)

The selflessness of the mother who mediates this relationship imports into Irish Studies the notion of 'lack' necessary to confirm the presence of the doubting Irish post-structuralist subject. At one level it is represented as the lack of women's writing, as for instance in the necessary loss of this from the original three volumes of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, and in the continued signalling of the 'loss' or lack of women's writing, or feminist critique in subsequent studies and analysis.[4] In a post-structuralist climate of ontological and epistemological doubt and scepticism, the assertion of the subject of Irish Studies is more often that not coupled with its concomitant deconstruction, and thus a bid for subjectivity must be carried out in terms of another forfeit —that of woman. Irish Studies has tended to focus primarily on Irish Studies' ontological status as a subject, with a bid for authenticity through appeal to or search for some origin and, in a specifically post-colonial context, a lost origin. In this cultural imaginary, mother and origin are understood as coterminous, and loss of mother ('s subjectivity), necessary to encode loss of origin.

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[3] Clair Wills (2001: 38) notes that "Since the 1950s the pattern of the traditional extended family has largely disappeared and been replaced by the atomised, nuclear family".

> Mothers and myths of origins have the same function, which may in the end be to remind us that something is always lost in stories of the constitution of the subject, whether we call it the body or an undivided self. (Jacobus, 1995: 16)

Mother and origin are denied, obscured and 'problematised', made into sites of ambivalence that cancel out the possibility of her self-presence, but her codified loss functions as amulet that guarantees the self-presence of the melancholic subject. Through the loss of the mother the child subject can be seen to come into existence in the symbolic through the Oedipal crisis. It is important to qualify Jacobus's assertion about myths and motherhood, as it is specifically in *Oedipally structured narratives* of the constitution of the subject that the *place* of the mother and myths of origins have the same function. Thus the favouring of Oedipal models of identity and historical relationship depend on investing in a notion of lost origins and on keeping the mother 'lost'.

MISSING WOMEN: MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

Notions of cultural representativeness and structure of the canon are not extended beyond the Oedipal model which underwrites the notion of literary history and insider-outsiderness that are dominant in terms of the production of cultural identity in Ireland today. The loss of women's writing in the traditions and canon of the latter half of the twentieth century is part of the necessary operations of a "melancholic discourse" of tradition that is predicated on loss (Bhabha, 1991: 102). It adds up to a state of "dereliction" of women within the symbolic order. "Women's ontological status in this culture is *dereliction*, the state of abandonment, described significantly in the same terms (*un fusionnel*) as the psychoanalytic term for merging or failure to differentiate and separate." (Whitford, 1991: 81) This is less a failure of women to separate from each other, but of society to separate from the mother. The symbolic dereliction of Irish women's writers within the cultural field results in preventing the full emergence of a subjectivity that challenges the defining Oedipal model. This psychological state of dereliction is defined as "a state of fusion [*fusionnel*] which does not succeed in emerging as a subject" (Whitford, 1991: 81).

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[4] For instance Conor McCarthy (2000: 43) writes:

> Some explanation is in order as to the absence here of creative writing by women. My intention has been to deal with writing that is either canonical (Friel, Banville) or counter-canonical (Bolger). I do not believe that a solid canon, or counter-canon, of recent or contemporary Irish women's writing as yet exists, and the problem with the essentially Agonistic model of cultural production in use here is that it has the effect of seeking out suitable groups of opponents who can be pitched against each other. I chose at the outset to deal with figures that had achieved canonical or near canonical status, and a serious study of contemporary female writers would seem to be as much an investigative and reconstructive task as a critical project.

In the Oedipal triangle, the 'place of the mother' is the only space available to woman, be she mother or daughter. The daughter and mother are collapsed into the one place, the place of the (phallic) mother, without separate names, meanings and a symbolic arrangement with which to recognise, identify with and thus individuate from one another. Insofar as Jacosta was mother and lover rolled into one, the 'place of the mother' incorporates mother, daughter and lover in the one site. Women must compete for the privilege of occupying this space —and thus we are familiar with the 'exceptional woman' who makes it into the canon. Her place in the canon as it stands is the 'place of the mother'. Arguments that depend on protecting such 'exceptionality' protects the terms of the Oedipal triangle and thus such women have to be disidentified with other women, rather than be identified with them in alternative relationship configurations.

However, if the notion of family or the psychodynamics of entering the symbolic and configuring identity were imagined otherwise then, representationally, more places would structurally be available to woman. In reality a mother functions as more than simply a symbol of loss, and it is this very confinement to such a symbolic position that has prevented the representation of mother as woman, mother in relation to daughter and daughter in relation to mother. In the Oedipal structuring of history, of myths of art and artist and of tradition in mainstream Irish Studies, there is currently no place for the figuring of mother-daughter relations, highlighting what Irigaray has identified as a structural blind spot in the western imaginary: "there is no possibility whatsoever, within the current logic of socio-cultural operations, for a daughter to situate herself with respect to her mother: because, strictly speaking, they make neither one nor two, neither has a name, meaning, sex, of her own, neither can be 'identified' with respect to the other" (Whitford, 1991: 82).

The co-subjectivity of the mother as a desiring, self-present adult subject interferes with the objectified use of tropes of mother as the self-less carrier of ideologies. When the re-investment of the Oedipal model is of primary concern to a critical narrative then it resists, often with punitive measures, the opening up of the 'place of the mother'. This prohibition continues a "non-differentiation (in-difference) of mother and daughter, and thus to the non-symbolisation of their relationship" (Whitford, 1991: 87). This results in more than simply a lack of images of mothers and daughters. The constitutional insistence on the muting of the woman in the mother/women signifier, the unpacking of these terms within representational practices specially prevents the full realisation of any notion of equality and inhibits any meaningful understanding of equality and justice. Jessica Benjamin warns us of the consequences for social justice of continuing to think of the mother as primarily an object when she writes: "denial of the mother's subjectivity, in theory and in practice, profoundly impedes our ability to see the world as inhabited by equal subjects" (Benjamin, 1995: 31). This has real repercussions at the level of the socio-sexual economy for lived lives, for mothers and daughters both, who are each representationally understood as existing in the 'place of the mother'. When there is no "genealogy on the side of women" then the "generational differences are blurred" and "the man takes the woman as a substitute for his mother while the woman simply takes her mother's place" (Whitford, 1991: 87). The woman continues to relate to the mother (-in-law) as an object in the 'place of the mother', and thus the inter-generational relationship continues to rely upon on absence, not self-presence, as the configuring mode of self-definition. The woman is not constructed as a subject, so an *inter-subjective* relation between the women who would break open the mother/daughter compound is not thus possible.

To this extent Irish Studies is comfortable with the familiar refrain of the 'lack' of women's writing, of its marginality, and of its historical loss, as it continues a narrative of loss necessary for the re-investment of a particular structuring narration of nation, or indeed post-nation. Without the recognised co-subjectivity of the mother, without her full realisation as a person, a subject and as a desiring being situated in language, in the symbolic, then "an alliance with an encounter between the energies of both [sexes] remains impossible" (Irigaray, 1991: 106). But before this could happen, there would have to be a willingness to lose current models of mapping culture and conferring status, in other words a reorganisation of the 'objective relations'. There would have to be a willingness to encounter the representational unknown, that is, what the symbolic world might look like from the perspectives of both mother and child.

Recognition of the mother as subject means losing current models of understanding the relationship of the cultural 'child' to the 'lost' mother. Griselda Pollack observes that the cultural stage on which the recognition of great works is valorised is the "world view" of the Oedipal boy. By extension the discursive culture that emerges around such works can be said to represent the relationship between the young boy who needs to keep his mother's subjectivity 'lost' in order for her to function as a suitable object for his own self-validation. As such women's writers or claims to authorship, subjectivity, self-ownership threaten to disrupt the mother child relationship in place between the cultural child and the mother/matter of form, or 'art', about which and *for which* the child will speak in order to individuate itself (Pollack, 1999: 13-14). This argument takes on an interesting aspect when applied to some of the critical responses that Eavan Boland's *The Lost Land* has received that demonstrate the reluctance of the cultural child to separate from the notion of the lost and absent 'mother'.

The Lost Land and its Critics

Boland's early poetic intervention in the tropes and iconicities of Irish motherhood had seemed to augur a "new territory" for her, a new language in which a woman writing could have equal purchase on the shared symbolic systems of a nation, but by 1998 this "new territory" had become *The Lost Land*, symbolising her acknowledgement of the loss of woman within Oedipally configured literary histories. The optimism and good faith in the new territory of woman being embraced by the discursive culture is lost by 1998, as the poet became increasingly aware of the structural resistance to the association of women's poetry in the collective imaginary. In this important collection Boland negotiates her relationship to her own iconic status as a poet who, along with other so-called 'Irish Women Poets', is powerfully and problematically placed in the 'place of the mother'. Boland problematises her relation to her own iconic history of representativeness and negotiates her own self-embraced object use as a phallic poetic mother. Boland decathects the phallic cultural 'mother' by assuming its voice and iterating a public, self-explicating woman persona who is ironically aware of the pre-phallic or pre-Oedipal presence of the mother before her 'ostensible' loss (into self-lessness) in the eyes of the culture. As such this volume explicitly undermines her own ambitions towards being a poet in the modernist sense of 'living the poet's life', which had becomes a poet's life predicated on tropes of absences. Thus the poetry of absence and the 'place of the mother' as predicated on lack, both of a woman's self and the representational structural relation to daughter, is challenged in this collection. The poem "The Lost Land" enumerates "all of the names [she] knows for a lost land:/ *Ireland. Absence. Daughter.*" (Boland, 1998: 38). Here she draws attention to the collapse of mother into Ireland, of mother into daughter so that mother-daughter symbolisation is lost. The collection attempts not only to recover the mother daughter intergenerational link, but also differentiates between the phallic mother body of 'lack' and the maternal body obscured by this insistence on lack.

Peter McDonald's review "Extreme Prejudice" (1999) of Eavan Boland's *The Lost Land* is a clear demonstration of the psychodynamics of a critical and artistic culture that defines itself as a child in relation to a muted form, constructed as 'mother', and which is uncomfortable with the mother leaving her definition as 'lack'. He writes that *The Lost Land*

> is packed with moments of self-conscious meditation on history, on family and on nation; it is full of "themes", like "Irish language and culture", which can "open out" (good to hear this one is so tightly shut it needs to expand a bit) "from autobiography into a sense of larger belonging"; it sets out to explore (Boland's own words this time) "the ghostly territory where so much human experience comes to be stored". (McDonald, 1999: 85)

McDonald's criticism that "the English" in *The Lost Land* "is awkward to the point of near collapse" (McDonald, 1999: 85) unwittingly notes a very deliberate effect on Boland's part. *The Lost Land* is, after all, the volume where Boland 'opens' up a 'wound', that which she had scarified and closed in "Mise Èire"; a scar muted and accepted as a signifier of lack, a mimetic and palely imitative "passable imitation/ of what went before" (Boland, 1989: 72). The woman's voice that valorised the female self in "Mise Èire" was thus speaking from the site of castration; the scar left in the wake of the removal of the phallus; woman as a lacking phallus: the phallic mother and the Object. In *The Lost Land* the speaker in the poem "Mother Ireland" identifies herself not as "Mise Èire", but as the 'mise en scène' on which the projections of the phallic mother play: "Night and day/ words fell on me" (Boland, 1998: 39). In this poem Boland historicises her relation to her own poetic desires, reading her earlier desire to be a 'representative' poet within modernist terms of representativeness as partaking of the exchange of the maternal body for the phallic mother. She charts the effect of accepting the compensatory power of the 'exceptional woman' in the place of the mother who is a dis-member of the society and of the symbolic order, "From one of them/ I learned my name" (Boland, 1998: 39).

In "Mother Ireland" she reverses this exchange, bringing the maternal body into representation by naming the phallic mother. She erects a poem that takes this phallic construction of femininity to the point of near collapse: "I rose up. I remembered it" (Boland, 1998: 39), thus she appears to accept the symbolic order on its own terms. Only then she "could tell my story" (Boland, 1998: 39). Erection, not English, is stretched beyond endurance here, and erection is then collapsed into 'openness'. Mise Èire becomes "Mise en abyme" offering what M.H. Abrams described as a "glimpse of the abyss itself in a vertigo of the underlying nothingness" (Abrams, 1988: 272-273). This openness is the uncharted territory of the unsymbolised maternal body, of the pre-Oedipal relationship that is obscured by the fetishisation of the Oedipal crises as the origins of identity. Readings such as McDonald's understand stretching into this supposedly pre-symbolic stage as indeed beyond endurance and the exposure of such 'openness' as "underlying nothingness". However, when read outside the fantastical register of the phallic mother, then the underlying nothingness is 'exposed' as meaningful indeed.

For Boland's speaker by 're-membering' herself not only documents her own phallic relation to the nation ("It was different/ from the story told about me" [Boland, 1998: 39]), but signals a difference outside of its problematic that can indeed be understood as story, as narrative, as meaningful. Instead of the 'nothingness' the "abyss", the 'chaos' that supposedly exists outside the symbolic order, what she finds there are other narrative possibilities. And in this story she 'leaves', echoing both the absence of the mother in the symbolic order, and the necessity of 'leaving' the reader to facilitate an inter-subjective relationship with the reader/child/nation who refuses to let 'Mother Ireland' go and who instead cleaves to her in the re-investing of a nostalgic and melancholic nationalism. For the nation and language are both identified with the "scar", with the phallic figuring of woman, of 'membered' Mother Ireland in "A Habitable Grief":

> This is what language is:
> a habitable grief. A turn of speech
> for the everyday and ordinary abrasion
> of losses such as this:
> which hurts
> just enough to be a scar.
> And heals just enough to be a nation. (Boland, 1998: 29)

The 'absence' of the passable imitation, the lack of the phallic mother is replaced with the mother actually leaving and 'opening' the wound: "I could see the wound I had left/in the land by leaving it" (Boland, 1998: 39). Here the phallic mother leaves her own representational lack, her own absence, and the wound is left open. The loss of the mother's lack is resisted by the reader/nation/ in the frozen symbolic order:

> *come back to us*
> they said.
> *Trust me* I whispered (Boland, 1998: 39)

The poem resists closure by not finishing on a full stop, leaving the wound and the form open, iterating the very openness which McDonald's reading finds so disturbing. The centring of the ontological conjunction of the 'object subject' "*me* I" in the middle of the final line brings the mother as a double being (as both the object world of the child, and as her own individuated subject) into the forefront of visibility, a doubleness which the cultural frames that fetishise the child's perspective are unable to accommodate. The *me* is italically stressed signalling the way in which this object condition of woman is iterated by the common culture. "*Me* I" are in an 'open' relationship, joined by the space of ostensible lack, signalling the condition of their separation in an Oedipal economy. Equally, this "*me* I" is not joined by an em-dash, thus breaking the umbilical tie between mother and child that seemingly naturalises the binding of the mother in the object position to the child's subject. This invites the recognition of the (m)other and the possibility of meaningful inter-subjective dialogue. Benjamin points out that "the condition for the other being recognised is that the other also be a subject, an ego" (Benjamin, 1998: 100) and she goes on to quote Cornell who presciently writes:

> the strangeness of the Other is that the Other is an I. But as an I, the Other is the same as me. Without this moment of universality, the otherness of the Other can only too easily be reduced to mythical projection. (Benjamin, 1998: 100)

The "strangeness" of the (m)other is that she is indeed an 'I', and this 'I'-ness is what interferes with her uninterrupted use as an object. But if the 'I'-ness of the mother is recognised then the 'I'-ness of the child can be too, and inter-subjective relating can take place. Without the recognition of the (m)other as the different 'same' then mother Ireland's difference is indeed mythologised as 'lost origins', as irretrievable 'pre-history' and (m)other's difference as threatening chaos, disorder and loss. With the centring of the "*me* I" in "Mother Ireland" the subject-object/child-mother symbiosis is here replaced by the mother-woman/object-subject conjunction that displaces the child/reader as the centre of the poem. This dis-placing of the reader corresponds to Sprengnether's observation that "when mothers write they unravel the fiction of mother-infant symbiosis" (Sprengnether, 1990: 233).

This unravelling is fiercely defended against by the critical economy represented by McDonald's reading of *The Lost Land* which is done in the manner of a child who objects to its mother's articulation of her own difference from her object use. The reading resists the poem's implications of the cultural displacement of the mother-object through which the formalist culture McDonald defends mediates itself. Twice he draws attention to her own self-situating. And tellingly it is on the point of her insisting on being recognised in the "conception" of an understanding of Ireland, that her self-insinuating seems most objectionable:

> Certainly a conception of Ireland and its history as significantly mythic, and as things made good, as it were, in the present time, and in Boland's own moving hand (or moving words), runs through *The Lost Land*, so that the poet feels she must get in on everything: there is no kind of historical suffering to which Boland cannot return a triumphant "Me too!". (McDonald, 1999: 88)

Boland's assumption that she can get "in on everything" is read as an impertinence too far by McDonald, and that combined with the palpable presence of her moving hands and words (her unpredictable behaviour outside of the child's control which means she can leave or exist outside the register of the child's understanding), adds up to her greedy (insatiable) possession of "everything". The objection to her 'me, me, me-ness' seems a disproportionate response to a poem that does what poets do, that is, shape and make claims for the language they choose. A response such as this is more proportionately understood as the splitting off of the child's feelings about being 'left out' of the mother's world and the projection of the child's greed for the mother onto her as her 'greedy' me-too-ness.

McDonald writes that "for all her fascination with 'my words', Eavan Boland's *The Lost Land* shows almost no acuteness of attention to language, and this is a lack from which the book simply cannot recover; nothing will make up for this" (McDonald, 1999: 89). It is implied here that Boland by 'leaving' is not properly 'attentive', she is the 'bad mother' within the Oedipal complementarity, whose pursuit of her own womanhood takes her attention away from the child, as s/he becomes aware that she has objects of desire other than him/her. The loss of the mother as "everything" creates a sense of 'nothing' and lack in the child. The "lack from which the book simply cannot recover", that "nothing will make up for" this "lack of attention", corresponds to the heartbroken child whose grief at his mother's loss feels like too much to bear, before the feelings can be negotiated and managed in play. Rather than face and negotiate the loss, lack is thus here split off and projected onto the mother to prevent her loss, and Boland's attempt to vacate the representational category of lack, of the phallic mother, means that lack has to be re-projected onto her. The transition from seeing the mother as an object to recognising her as a subject is facilitated by play. Symbolic play replaces symbolic equation as the child's main means of mediating the world. Instead of the mother *being* the object, she comes to 'symbolise' it, and in turn the child learns to symbolise her so that he/she can manage her moving away from him/her (as in the well known Freudian example of the *Fort-Da* game) and a gap between mother and object is created that allows her subjectivity to be recognised. The literalness of the well-behaved symbolic equation is replaced with the punning, playfulness and slippage of symbolic play.

This review resists allowing such play that allows the acceptance of this loss and the acceptance of the mother as a subject a legitimate part in the aesthetic of the collection. Instead it presents a set of prescriptions about what good poems and sentences should be about —prescriptions that protest too much independence facilitated only, as previously argued, by a disguised dependence on the object. Thus the poem is not expected to 'play' but to, in so many words, 'grow up and earn its keep'. It is, we are told, "an elementary principle of English that short sentences must earn their keep as elements in a larger pattern of variation and syntactic suppleness" (McDonald, 1999: 86). A poem, after all "must stand by its own integrity of expression, form and intelligence; it cannot lean on 'larger patterns' of pseudo-coherence as a way out of its own shoddiness of exertion, its weakness of form, or its apparent silliness" (McDonald, 1999: 87). No silly play, and no weakness allowed —speak up, make yourself heard, no fumbling for words, no babble, echolalia, no pleasure in sounds, no risk, no play, no separation. Boland's work is described as "stumbling and bathetic" and "non-sense". What McDonald describes as nonsense is indeed related to a non-sense: "talking nonsense slowly, deliberately, and with complete conviction doesn't stop it being nonsense" (McDonald, 1999: 87). The lack of 'sense' is the child's sensing that the mother's attention, her sense, is elsewhere, which is then split off and re-projected onto the mother. The absence instantiated by such poetry for such readers is part of protecting the child's fantasy sense that the mother belongs only to them.

This refusal to let the mother belong to herself is echoed in Carol Rumens review of *The Lost Land,* which compares the experience of being witness to Boland's self-ownership of her own historicisable trajectory as equivalent to being beset by a pedantic and overbearing "teacher". Carol Rumens compares Boland's tone in *The Lost Land* to the manner of a strict schoolmarm who 'over-teaches':

> reading the poems in *The Lost Land,* I sometimes feel as if I'm sitting in a classroom.... [T]he teacher has a rhythmic, melodious, if slightly monochrome, voice. She has captured my imagination; Pictures are unravelling in my head. Then all of a sudden she slams her desk-lid down. "Are you paying attention girl, girls and boys", she booms. "I am talking to you. I am teaching you an important lesson. ARE YOU LISTENING?". (Rumens, 1999: 124)

Boland's self-contextualising thus meets with punitive criticism centred on outrage at her authorial presence. This outrage is disguised in critical language that reads such 'self-explication' or 'self-situating' as detracting from the 'integrity' of her work or its ability to 'speak for itself'. In reality such self-awareness of her work prevents its being self-made, self-birthed in the terms of a tradition of poetic authority which depends on the matter as silent, and thus her self-awareness, unlike that of her male counterparts, has not succeeded in making her an integral part of the 'powerful tradition' but locates her instead in the sub-section of women's writing. Rumens goes on to comment that "if the language here were more highly charged, less clichéd, this authorial self-consciousness would justify itself ... as it stands it intrudes". Interestingly it is only by conforming to the personal, interiorised and minimised hushed conventional femininity that Boland elicits Rumens's approval. Rumens writes that "paradoxically, the quieter the voice, the more personal the psychological dynamic of the poem, the more authority it yields" (Rumens, 1999: 125). When a woman's quietness and her affirmation of personal, interior psychological dynamic that continues to affirm another's 'authority' meets with approval, then the underlying logic of an Oedipal model of thinking history, identity and community is exposed. When the fear of the unknown and of loss that informs Oedipal child's cultural defence can be confronted though critical and discursive play, then woman can be less an object, and more a subject in her own right. When the myth of lost origins represented by the phallic nationalist mother is replaced by the very material self-presence of the maternal body, then some hope for social justice will be possible. For as long as the perspective of the cultural child is authenticated as the singular and primary view, not just of society, but also of critical dialogue, then Irish women in the family of Irish studies will continue, representationally and constitutionally, in the castrated place of the phallic mother.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Review of Elizabeth Butler Cullingford (2001). *Ireland's Others: Gender and Ethnicity in Irish Literature and Popular Culture*. Cork: Cork University Press in association with Field Day. 304 pp.

By *SPURGEON THOMPSON*

Elizabeth Butler Cullingford's new book comprises a series of counter-intuitive readings of a range of Irish literary and cultural texts. Written in accessible language, the book not only presents us with a model of how interpretation should be performed, it is a pleasure to read. *Ireland's Others* should be mandatory reading for all beginning students of Irish literature and culture. Cullingford is best known as the author of the foundational text in Yeats studies, *Yeats, Ireland, and Fascism* published in 1980. In the earlier book, Cullingford set an example of how to link close reading with politically oriented analysis in literary studies. She is also the author of the first sustained, book-length feminist reading of Yeats, *Gender and History in Yeats's Love Poetry* (1993). Cullingford, then, brings her skills as a reader of literary texts to bear upon a wide range of Irish cultural and dramatic texts, and the result is a series of carefully linked, highly original interpretive vignettes. Appearing in the "Critical Conditions: Field Day Monographs" series edited by Seamus Deane, *Ireland's Others* shows us why Cullingford's work remains deeply relevant, engaged with current debates, and powerful in range.

The book begins by setting out in a counter-intuitive direction. Within Irish Studies it has become commonplace to examine the stereotypes of Irish people produced in English texts, pointing out their harmful effects, that they were alibis to colonialism, that the "Stage Irishman" damaged the reputation of Irish people, etc. Cullingford asks a simple question to shake up the assumptions behind this line of inquiry. What about the "stage Englishman"? How did this figure function politically *in Irish texts*, and isn't it more important that we examine these "decent chaps" or "Brits behaving Badly" (as she labels them) as expressions of a pattern of Irish negotiation with, replies to, and resistances to a history of English vilification of the Irish? The value of such an inquiry lies in its ability to dislodge a (justified, of course) fixation with the

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texts of the colonizer and focus attention on how Irish literary, dramatic, and filmic texts operate to undermine or negotiate a systematically elaborated representational dissymmetry. Cullingford's best readings are of Boucicault and Neil Jordan, while using Frank McGuinness (as she does through most of the book) as a touchstone or literary-critical compass point. This first section is compact and drives its points home clearly and forcefully, with articulate interpretations leavened by a healthy dose of counter-intuitive associational thinking.

The second section of *Ireland's Others* concentrates on the analysis, more specifically, of anti-colonial metaphors and analogies. Here is where Cullingford attempts to intervene at the intersection of Postcolonial and Irish Studies. By and large, the attempt is productive of new readings of relatively familiar texts and situations. Cullingford's larger point about analogy is appropriate: that Irish writers and artists have continually asserted the analogy between their own situation and that of other colonized or oppressed peoples, from Egypt, Carthage, and Greece, to cowboys and Indians. Cullingford pulls into her analysis a broad range of such moments in Irish literary history, tracing back from Joyce to Vallancey, through Friel and Yeats to McGuinness, Jim Sheridan, and John Ford. The reason Cullingford examines this analogy thematic is, as she states: "If the effective use of metaphor is commonly privileged as the gold standard of good poetry, the ability to see one's own political predicament mirrored in that of others might be called the gold standard of the politics of empathy" (99). This "politics of imaginative solidarity" that Cullingford traces in rich detail refutes wonderfully the banal and under-researched criticisms of postcolonial Irish Studies such as those made by Stephen Howe. Further, the point that Cullingford makes is neither simple nor blunt: analogy, as she points out, is never a stable form of representation, but often gains in currency and relevance in different contexts. She writes: "The persistence of a political analogy, even such an academic or classical one [as that of Ireland and Carthage] ... preserves for a colonized or formerly colonized culture imaginative parallels that acquire new currency at moments of historical crisis" (127). While Cullingford supplies a varied and substantial range of examples to back this up, the point about analogy remains, however, under-theorized. One wonders, for example, if there is a significant theoretical difference between analogy and allegory, and if there is, how Cullingford would understand it. (The two terms seem to alide frequently in her analyses.) Here is where someone like Fredric Jameson on "third world" allegory may have been useful, for example.

It is both a strength and a weakness of Cullingford's book that it includes so many close readings of literary and cultural texts to support its points about the politics of empathy and anti-colonial analogy. It provides postcolonial critics a range of solid, identified, delimited examples. But one misses, at times, the kind of philosophical and theoretical depth such as that exemplified by Luke Gibbons, whose points about anti-colonial allegory have a larger scope and bearing. For example, Gibbons points out that allegory as a conceptual and cultural field of negotiation names the conflicted character of the public sphere in colonized societies. Such broader claims are missing from Cullingford's book —one often thinks because she wants to retain specificity at the expense of broader claims. Things are more complicated, Cullingford seems to be saying.

Of course they are, but additional and developed theoretical perspectives are also needed badly in contemporary Irish cultural studies. Cullingford bows out of this responsibility with the following explanation: "The trajectory of some leading scholars, most notably Seamus Deane and David Lloyd, is towards philosophical reflections upon topics such as national identity and state formation. I admire this work, I have benefited from it enormously and it has enabled many of my conclusions, but it is not my work" (3). So theory takes a back seat and the texts themselves are privileged.

The third section of the book is much less focused than the first two, addressing the appearance and many happy returns of Irish canonical writers in popular culture, while making a few nuanced points about the grounding of empathy in such culture. The chapter on Yeats and popular culture, for example, is a collection of entrances his texts have made in texts as diverse as Sears catalogues to soap operas, the magazine *UFO Universe* and the television series *Babylon 5.* While broadly fascinating, and very carefully researched, this chapter exemplifies the limitations of the third section of the book. It is too scattered in focus to retain coherence and political-critical purchase. Further, Cullingford (perhaps unintentionally) reinforces the divide between high culture and "popular culture" that Modernism invented (see Andreas Huyssen): "Perhaps the high-cultural centre does not exactly hold," as she concludes her chapter in Yeats. The field of cultural studies has carefully delimited concepts in the debate over "high" and "low" culture that could have been useful here.

For all of the emphasis on close readings at the expense of theory, however, and for all of the unfocused analysis in the last third of the book, *Ireland's Others* presents the Irish Studies and broader English studies community a powerfully argued and remarkably diverse tapestry to learn from. Its carefully compiled bibliography is a tremendously useful archive, and makes it clear that Cullingford is a serious researcher, in whatever cultural fields she chooses to intervene. Through it all, Cullingford's sense of humor and frank critical demeanor makes the book a pleasure. To take but one appropriate example, in her section on analogy and the American Wild West she includes the following: "Even Yeats in his old age read little but detective stories and novels about the Wild West, a curious fact that might nuance our reading of his epitaph: 'Horseman pass by'" (163). Indeed. Get along, little dogey.

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Review of Inés Praga Terente (Ed.)(2002). *Irlanda ante un nuevo milenio*. Burgos: Asociación Española de Estudios Irlandeses. 293 pp. (ISBN: 84-607-4755-7 Pb.)

By ***KEITH GREGOR***

This sonorously titled volume is essentially a book of proceedings from the first annual conference of the newly-founded Spanish Association for Irish Studies (under its Spanish acronym, AEDEI) held at Burgos last year. Given the novelty of the event which it marks, the book thus has an inaugural status in the history of Spanish publications in the field. This alone would be sufficient to commend it to scholars working in Spain and beyond, were it not for the range and depth of the papers contained within its attractive covers, a range and depth which give some idea of the complexity of what, from an increasingly international perspective, now passes as 'Irish Studies'.

As a collection of proceedings, the book obviously suffers some of the limitations facing a volume of this kind. On the one hand, the bulk of the contributions are paper-length pieces which can at most merely gesture towards the much larger issues at stake behind them; on the other, the impressive-sounding title conceals a multitude of interests whose only bearing to the 'new millennium' is, one feels, the date of the Burgos conference and some rhetorical self-positioning in the titles/opening lines or conclusions to some of the pieces published. Thus, and despite (in her foreword to the volume) editor Inés Praga's division of the papers into broadly cultural and "historical" work, papers on the crucial early-20th century phase and a voluminous "literary section" which covers the three main genres, the larger and potentially more interesting story of Irish transformations, or transformations in the "*idea* of Ireland", in the light of the new millennium hardly gets told.

There are of course exceptions. The first of the papers published, Rosa González's plenary to the Burgos event, pithily entitled "The Cultural Greening of Britain", records changing British perceptions of Northern Ireland in the wake of the 1998 Peace Agreement. Drawing on such refreshingly up-to-date popular-cultural evidence as the much repeated TV comedy *Father Ted*, the Belfast-born playwright Marie Jones's critically acclaimed *Stones in His Pockets* and Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical flop *The Beautiful Game*, González makes a powerful case for the notion of the flight from reality as what presently governs (one might interject, has *always* governed) most British audiences' mind-set towards the Province, the idea (to adopt one of the newspaper headlines she cites) that "Hibernianism is hip" (17) being inextricably linked to the fact that Britons (still) favour "the humorous stage Irishman over Paddy the terrorist" (31). (A similar conclusion is reached by Maite Padrós in her paper "Irish Cinema and the New Millennium".)

The idea of 'millennial' Ireland (or, as here, the millennial 'idea' of Ireland) is also present in Yolanda Fernández's highly informative "Ireland on Call – Recent Developments in

Education", which considers the incorporation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTS) in the Irish public education system, especially as it relates to the teaching of languages. If Ireland can ever fully shake off the kind of representations recorded by González, important revolutions must come (as arguably they always have) in such sensitive fields as schooling. Though perhaps toeing too closely the official (government) line in places, Fernández's paper shows how and how much European Community funding has gone into technologizing education in the Republic, discusses possible spin-offs for pupils and teachers and appends a useful list of internet addresses for further consultation.

A number of papers plumb 20th century Irish history for models or simply a premonition of things to come, with figures such as Douglas Hyde and Sean O'Faolain being recruited as luminaries to shed light on the present peace process. Others give a voice to Ireland's neglected Other, woman, though only one strikes a vaguely 'millennial' note in this respect: Ana Rosa García's "Revising Women's Inclusions in Irish Anthologies on Poetry", which considers what she suggestively calls the "uncanonising" (270) of women's writing in various collections and books of poetry (most notably the first three volumes of the *Field Day Anthology*) and concludes (perhaps rather woollily): "Our mission now is to wait and see if this imbalance gets corrected as the twentieth-first [sic] century flourishes" (275).

In a volume launching the work of a *Spanish* association of Irish Studies one might have expected rather more papers developing what Praga describes in her foreword as "the Spanish response" (14) to the vast range of discourses issuing from and/or centring on Ireland. Spain's implication in and with Irish history, from religious and geopolitical alliances to more recent, and often spurious, associations between sectarian aspirations in Ulster and the Basque Country, might, one feels, have prompted rather more reflexions on possible intercultural links. As it stands, the latter are explored in only three of the papers which make up the volume: Eduardo de Gregorio's "A Challenge for the New Millennium: New Directions in Research on the Early Cultural Relation between Ireland and Spain", which looks specifically at Isidore of Seville's influence on 7th-century Irish texts; Marie Byrne's "El Colegio de los Irlandeses de Sevilla del siglo XVII", a short history of the college founded to receive and educate Irish religious refugees; Asier Altuna García's "The Spanish Cid: a Hero-Prototype in Anglo-Irish Literature: 1810-1850", a study of the role of the hero of Spain's anonymous epic in work of the period. The rest of the papers focus on Irish historiography, film and especially literature from standpoints which owe more to developments in recent Irish, British and American work than to specifically Spanish therоetical or historical paradigms.

This, as I suggested at the start of this review and as Praga makes clear in her foreword (13), is understandable given the very limited tradition of Spanish scholarly practice of Irish Studies or the fact that the bulk of what gets taught or written about Ireland in Spain is (still) bundled into the (deceptively inclusive) ambit of '*Filología Inglesa*'. That said, the volume includes some theoretically rich and critically virtuoso readings both of authors whose work is still relatively unknown and untranslated in Spain (George Moore, Flann O'Brien, Mary Lavin, Edna O'Brien, Patrick McCabe, Martin McDonagh) and of authors whose work has, here as elsewhere, traditionally been assigned to the canon of Eng. Lit. and is only now being read in the light of a specifically Irish cultural politics (Samuel Beckett, Brian Friel, Seamus Heaney). A particularly powerful reading of the work of Ireland's latest Nobel prize-winner is provided by Portuguese scholar Rui Homem-Carvalho's concluding piece, "From Furrow to Jet Stream, from Worry to Wonder: Heaney and the Space of Writing", which traces the development of the poet's treatment of the 'sense-of-a-place' question down to Heaney's most recent collection *Electric Light* (2001). Drawing on formulations by cultural critics like Doreen Massey and Edward Soja as well as statements by Heaney himself, whom the author interviewed in 2001, Homem's paper is an eloquent tribute to the poet's ability "to combine the repeated reinvention of the space of his writing with those elements of continuity that secure its close-knit texture" (292).

Inevitably, a volume of this kind leaves more questions unanswered than answered. While sensibly resisting the essentialist pull to supply an answer to the question frequently put to 'postcolonial' cultural formations, a question Praga rehearses in her foreword ("'Who are you?'"), it yet falls short of the potentially more interesting, though no less fraught, project of showing how Ireland has become "a spiritual rather than a physical home and [made] us inhabitants not of a geographical country but of a country of the mind" (12). Aside from being unable to define who "we" are here, this multi-authored and multi-angled collection provides only the fleetingest glimpses of how, if at all, Ireland has effected this intriguing process of spiritual (re-)population. On the other hand, and to the inestimable credit of both Praga as editor and the numerous authors who have contributed to it, *Irlanda ante un un nuevo milenio* opens a new and exciting chapter in the foreign history of Ireland, a history which the second congress of AEDEI, held in Barcelona earlier this year, promises to continue and enrich.

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Volume 2, Number 2, 2002

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I.2.3. Spelling, capitalization and punctuation should be consistent within each article.

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I.2.5. Short and/or telegraph-style sections and/or paragraphs should be avoided.

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Contributors must submit **3 copies** of their manuscript (Word Perfect or MS Word).

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I.3.3. Elements of the article should be arranged as follows: title (written in bold type, capitalized and centred), author´s full name (plus affiliation, mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address), abstract, keywords, text, acknowledgements, notes, references, and appendices if any. Please note that the author´s name, affiliation, address, telephone/fax number and e-mail address should appear on only one copy to facilitate anonymous review.

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Hilferty, J. Valenzuela-Manzanares, J. & Villarroya, O. (1998). Paradox Lost. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 9:2, 175-188.

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Calvo, C. & J.J. Weber (1998). *The literature workbook*. London: Routledge.

Sánchez, A., Sarmiento, R. Cantos, P. & Simón, J. (1995). *CUMBRE. Corpus lingüístico del español contemporáneo: fundamentos, metodología y análisis*. Madrid: SGEL.

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Martínez-Lorente, J. & Pujante, A.L. (2000). Mundos diatópicos y narrativa utópica: modelo social y conflicto humano en *We, Brave New World* y *1984*. In *Selected papers in language, literature and culture. Proceedings of the 17th International Conference of AEDEAN*, 383-87.

Doctoral Dissertation:

Walton, D. (1997). *Mail bondage. Sentencing Wilde between the sheets: An epestemology of the epistolary (an architectonic rhapsody)*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Murcia, Spain.

Cantos-Gomez, P. (1995). *Lexical disambiguation based on standard dictionary definitions and corpus-extracted knowledge*. Unpublished Master Dissertation. University of Essex, Colchester, United Kingdom.

Book Review:

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Technical Report:

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Conference paper:

Gregor, K. (2000). *The torch and the marriage bed, or getting a grip on Cuchulain: The politics of Yeats's* On Baile's Strand. Paper given at *ESSE 5*, University of Helsinki, Finland, August.

Conde-Silvestre, J.C. & Hernández-Campoy, J.M. (1997). *The 'Acceptance' of the Chancery Standard in Late Medieval England: Sociolinguistic and Geolinguistic Tenets.* Paper given at the XXI International Conference of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies (AEDEAN), University of Seville, Spain, December.

Manchón, R. M., Roca de Larios, J. & Murphy, L. (1997). *Lexical problems in L1 and L2 writing: Comparing beginner and intermediate foreign language learners.* Paper given at the XV Conference of the Spanish Association of Applied Linguistics (AESLA), Zaragoza, April.

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Include the appendices starting on a separate page following the list of references. Each appendix should be labelled with numbers or letters and titled. If only one appendix is used, no identifying letter or number is required.

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ISSN: 0802-6106. VOLUME 12 (2002) CONTAINS 2 ISSUES.
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ISSN: 1360-6441. VOLUME 6 (2002) CONTAINS 4 ISSUES.
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ISSN: 1578-7044

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